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Vagabond

PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 21

English Edition

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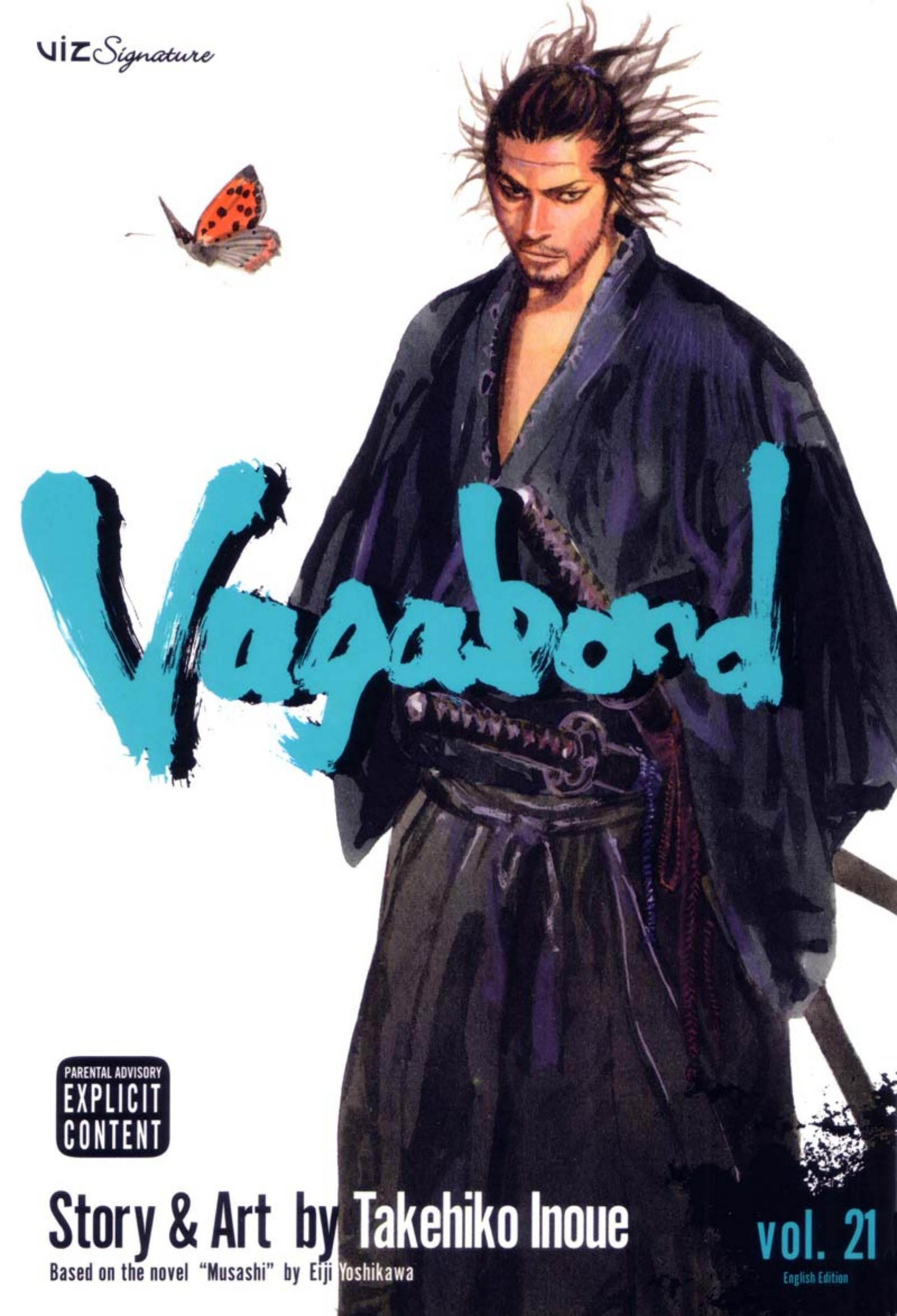
Vagabond



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RATED M MATURE

PARENTAL ADVISORY
VAGABOND is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. This volume contains graphic violence and sexually explicit situations.

Vagabond

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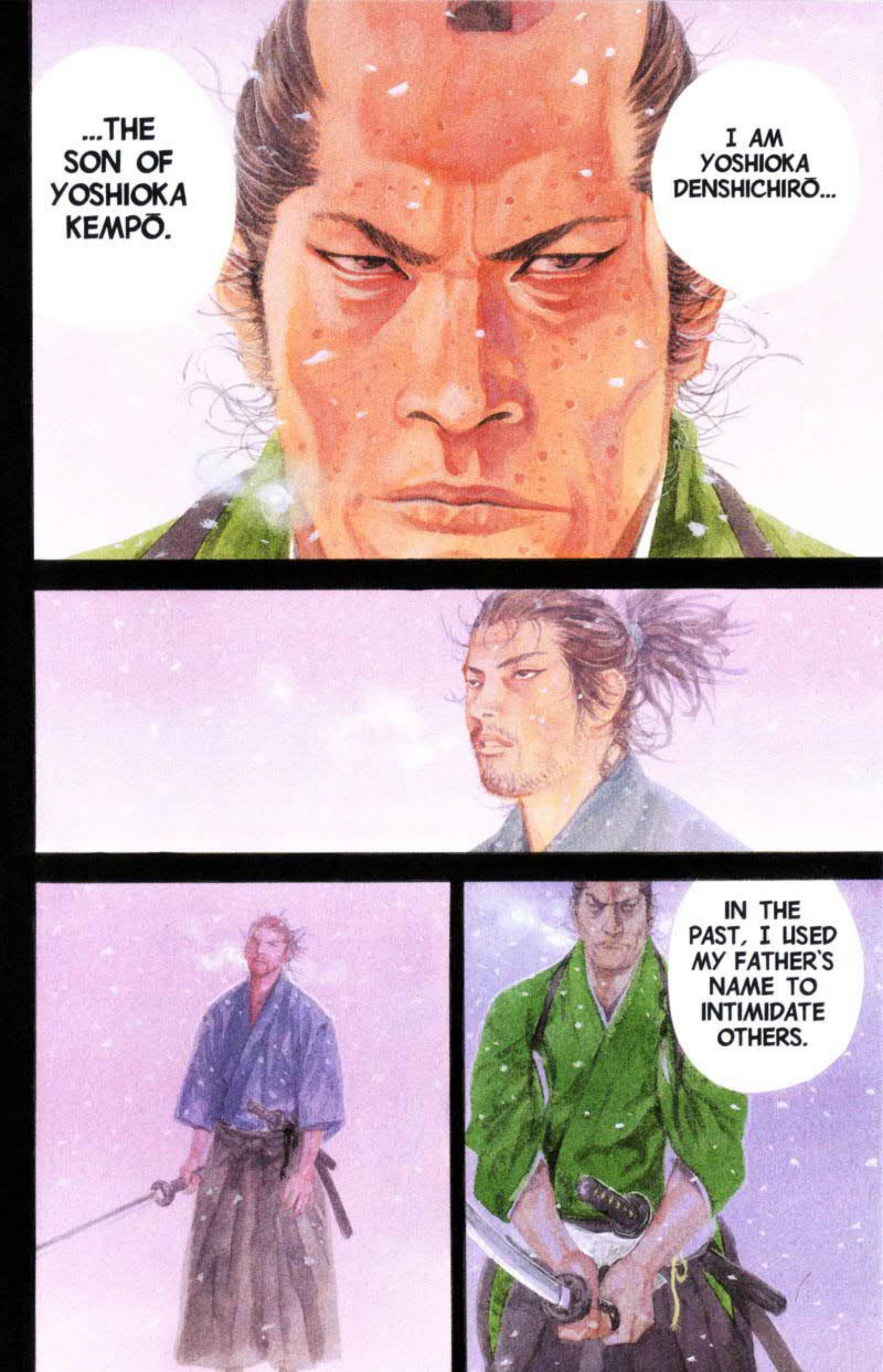
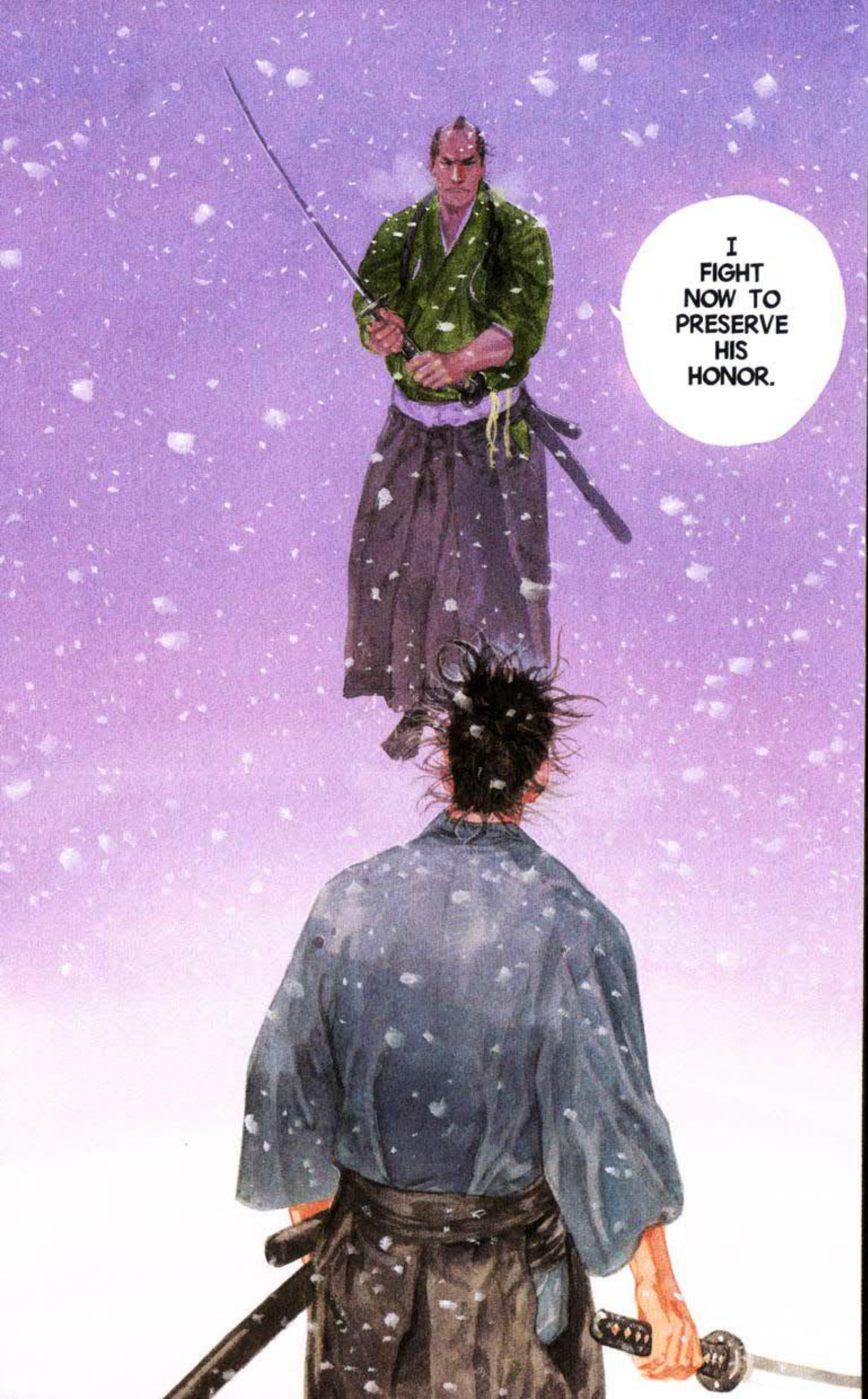
THE WINTERS IN KYOTO...
IS THERE ALWAYS THIS MUCH SNOW?


...THE SON OF YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ.
I AM YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ...
IN THE PAST, I USED MY FATHER'S NAME TO INTIMIDATE OTHERS.


I FIGHT NOW TO PRESERVE HIS HONOR.

#180
Gathering
in Kyoto

KYOTO
AT THE
END OF
THE NINTH
YEAR OF
THE KEICHŌ
ERA (1604).

TEN DAYS
PRIOR
TO THIS
INCIDENT...

(YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ CHALLENGES MIYAMOTO MUSASHI TO A DUEL TO BE HELD AT THE COURTYARD OF RENGEŌIN TEMPLE ON THE NINTH DAY OF THE NEW YEAR.)

THIS IS THE FIGHT EVERYONE'S BEEN TALKING ABOUT.
MURMUR
I SEE.
THIS IS IT.
MURMUR
WOW...
MURMUR

WHO'S STRONGER ?
...MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, A MAN WITH QUITE THE GROWING REPUTATION.
...THE SECOND SON OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL AGAINST...
YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ ...

DON'T BE STUPID.
IT'S NOT WORTH GETTING KILLED.
...IT MUST MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE A REAL MAN.
HAVING YOUR NAME POSTED UP THERE IN A CHALLENGE FROM THE YOSHIOKA CLAN...

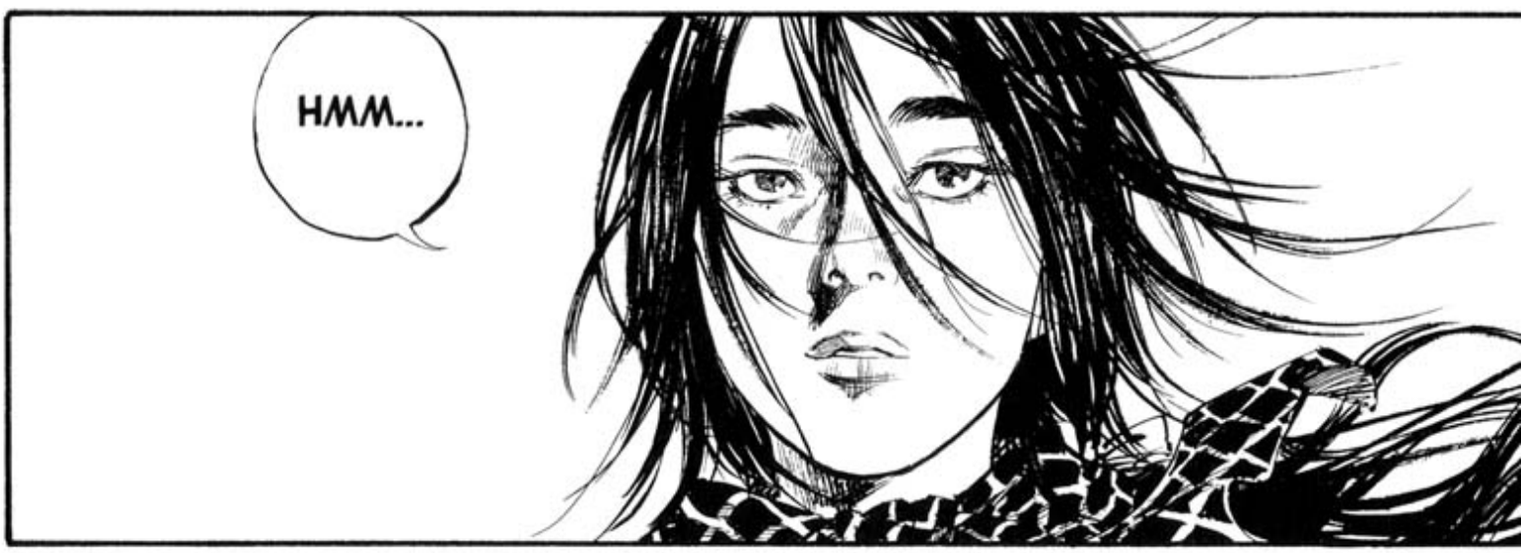
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY ANYONE WOULD SEEK OUT A SWORD-FIGHT LIKE THIS.
THAT'S THE FATE OF THOSE BORN INTO THE REPUTABLE YOSHIOKA FAMILY.
WELL, MUSASHI MAY BE STRONG, BUT HE'S IN TROUBLE NOW.

FICH
FICH

HUH...?

YOSHIOKA
SEIJŪRŌ!!

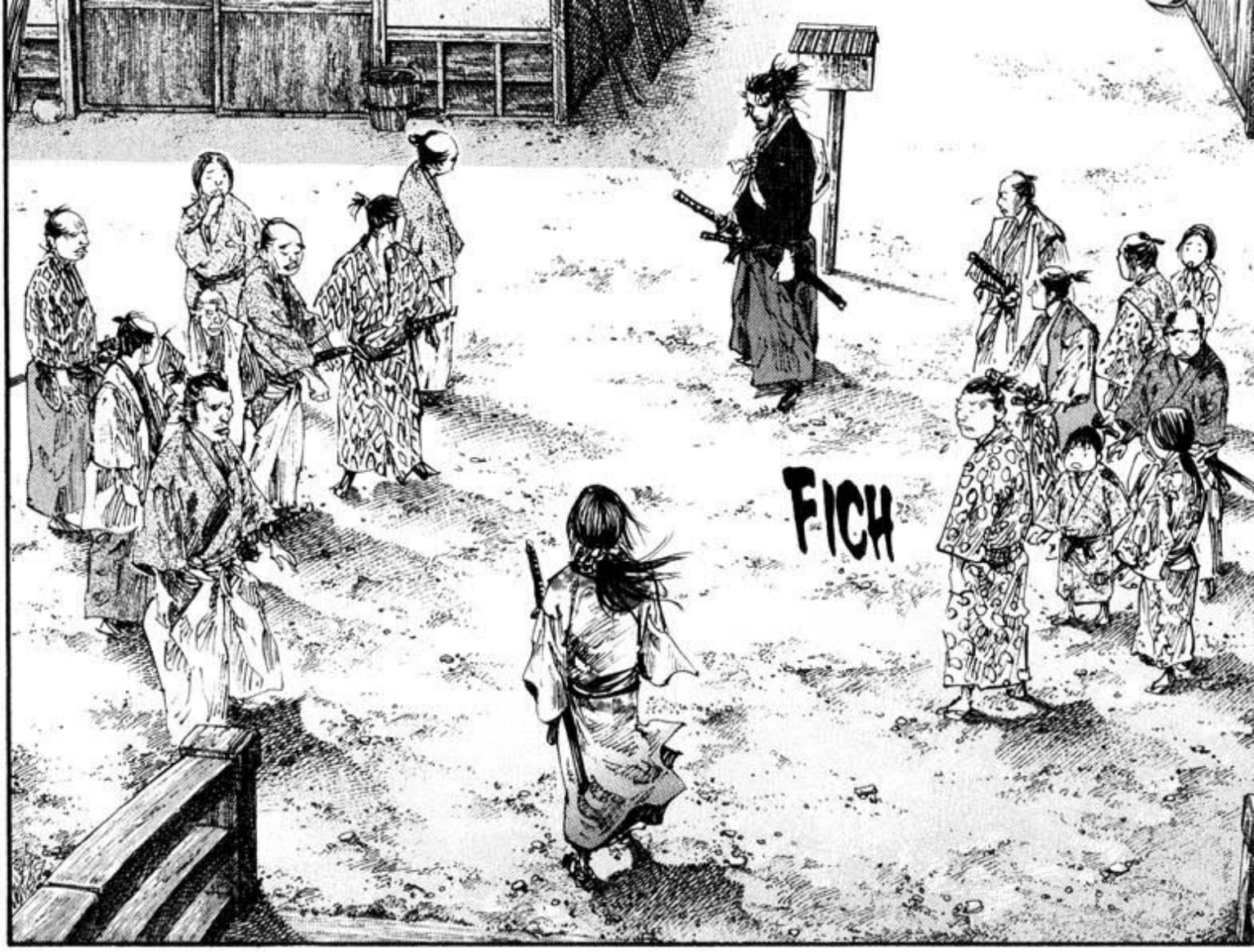
FICH
FICH
FICH


HMM...

YOU'RE BLOCKING MY VIEW.

?!

HEY ...
GASP


FICH

...

SO IT'S COME TO THIS...
I WARNED YOU BACK THEN.

YOU'LL DIE.
IT'S BEEN A YEAR.
I SEE YOU'VE CHANGED ...
H- HEY...
IS THAT MUSASHI?
WHAT ?

CUT DOWN THE YOUNGER BROTHER, THEN THE OLDER BROTHER WILL *HAVE* TO FIGHT ME...

GULP

YOUR FAME HASN'T MADE YOU ANY WISER.
YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED.

!

FWIP
PLIP
IF IT'S A REPUTATION YOU'RE AFTER, THEN YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME WITH THE YOSHIOKA.
IT'S THE YAGYŪ'S ERA.
THE YOSHIOKA'S TIME HAS PASSED.

YOU'RE THE ONE I'M AFTER, SEIJŪRŌ.
NOT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

THOSE WERE THE DAYS...

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED EITHER.

IT REALLY GETS TO ME...

I'M JUST MAKING GOOD ON MY PROMISE TO DENSHICHIRŌ.

WHAT DOES?

YOU THINK YOU'RE STRONGER THAN ME, DON'T YOU?

DEFEAT EVERYONE WHO MAY BE STRONGER THAN YOU...
...THEN YOU MAY BE CALLED INVINCIBLE.

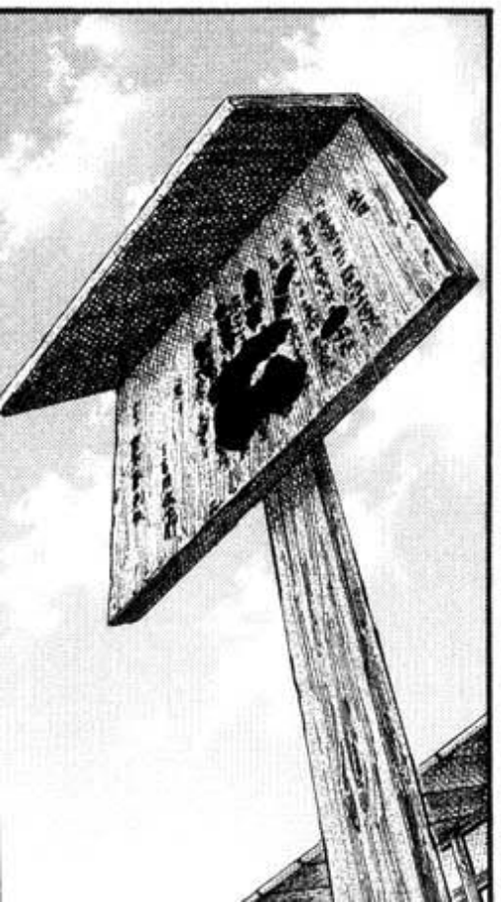
KEEP CUTTING EVERYONE DOWN, UNTIL YOU'RE THE LAST MAN STANDING...
THAT'S HOW TO EARN THE RIGHT TO BE CALLED INVINCIBLE.

MY, MY...
...!!
GASP...
PERHAPS YOU WERE MORE MATURE LAST YEAR.
IT'S REALLY TOO BAD.
FICH
FICH

RUSTLE
.....
SKRCH SKRCH
PLIP
GULP
SPLAP
...?

GASP!
OH NO!!

THIS IS BAD.

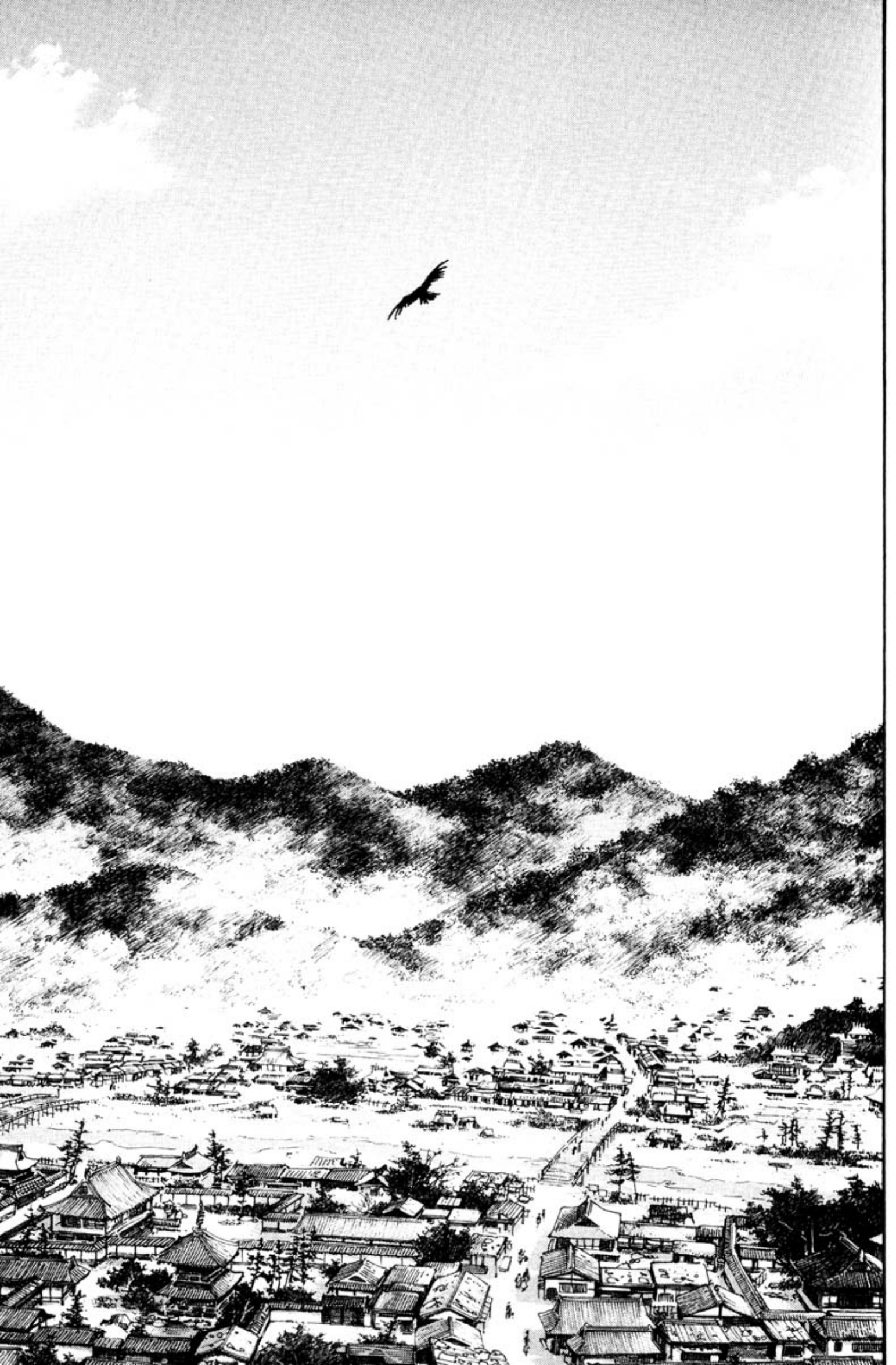


TMP TMP
PTEW PTEW

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
DON'T YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE?

GRB
ACK!
SMSH
SMSH
STOP IT!

FICH
FICH



GLUG
GLUG
FWIP
AHH! THAT'S GOOD!
WHAT'RE YOU LOOKING AT?
PLEASE DO FORGIVE MY RUDENESS.
YOU DRINK YOUR SAKE WITH SUCH RELISH.

AHH! DELICIOUS!
FWIP
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M HAVING DRINKS WITH THE SASAKI KOJIRŌ
WHAT AN HONOR.
ALLOW ME...
SIR KAME-MURA.
...I MIGHT NOT BE THE MOST CULTIVATED GENTLEMAN IN THE LAND, BUT AS A MAN WHO LIVES BY THE SWORD, I CAN TELL.
TELL WHAT?
OH, COME NOW...
SIR KAME-MURA...
HUH?
I SUSPECT THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THEM.
THERE ARE SWORDSMEN OUT THERE WHOSE REPUTA-TIONS FALL FAR BELOW THEIR GREAT ABILITIES...

WHT ARE YOU...?
WHAT ?

DRAW YOUR SWORD...
NOW THEN...
...?

HMPH
AS DRUNK AS I AM, YOU STILL CAN'T TAKE ME ON?
PERHAPS I WAS MISTAKEN ABOUT YOU.

FSH

WHAT?
URK

THEY FIGHTING?
WHO KNOWS.

I SEE NOW I WAS RIGHT ABOUT YOU.
ANOTHER ROUND, KAMEMURA!

GLEAM
!?

BUT I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES ELSEWHERE, SO I COULDN'T POSSIBLY ACCEPT HIS OFFER.
NOW I WOULDN'T WANT TO INCONVENIENCE YOU BY ASKING YOU TO TAKE MY PLACE...

LISTEN HERE, A CERTAIN DAIMYO HAS BEEN PESTERING ME ABOUT A POSITION...
HE NEEDS A GOOD INSTRUCTOR IN THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
THAT'S NOT SURPRISING, GIVEN YOUR REPUTATION.

I-I SEE.
GULP
A RECOM-MENDA-TION.
I'M SORRY FOR TESTING YOU.
AT THE RISK OF BEING INSOLENT, I JUST HAD TO BE SURE I COULD GIVE YOU MY RECOM-MENDATION.
OH, I WOULDN'T MIND.
GULP
BUT I'M NOT SURE I'M QUALIFIED.
TUGG
NOW WE ALSO HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THE MATTER OF THE RECOMMENDATION FEE--AS I'M SURE YOU'RE WELL AWARE, IT'S CUSTOMARY IN THIS SORT OF SITUATION.

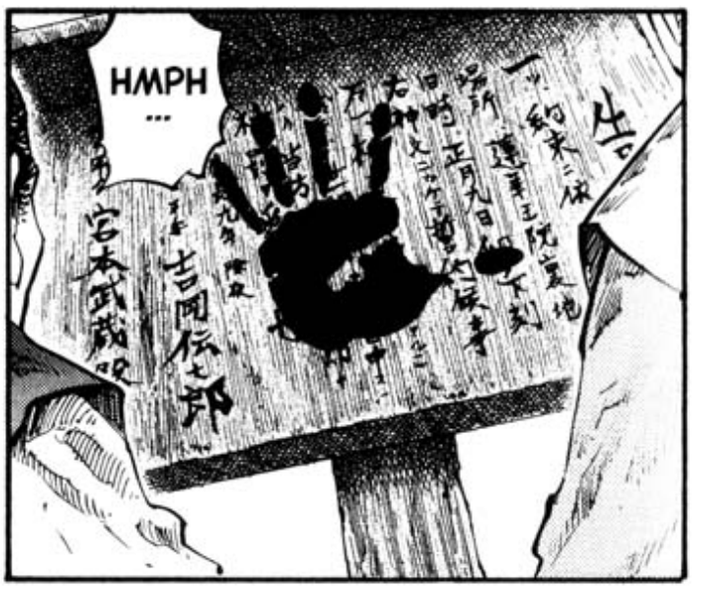
HOW MUCH?
RCHNG
HEH HEH HEH.
.....

AHH...
KRK
AH...
KRK
KRK
AHH...
AH...
AH...
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!!

I FEEL EMPTY INSIDE...
I'M ALL ALONE.
SLP
SLP
SLP

WHAT ?!
WHO DID THIS...?

MUSASHI ...
HE'S ALREADY HERE IN KYOTO...


HMPH ...
吉岡伝七郎
宮本武蔵

AHHH.

AHH.

!
AH HA HA.

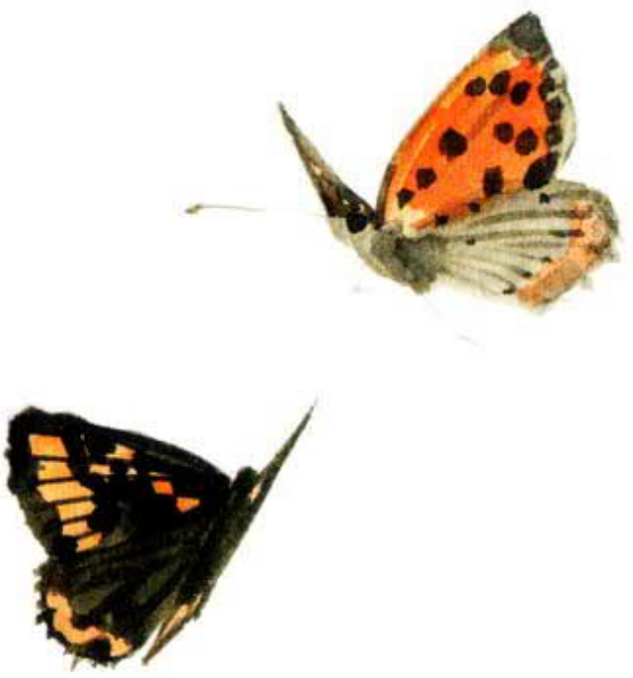
WHO LAUGHED ?
WHAT NERVE !

AHHH!

Vagabond

(WONDER WHEN I'LL GET THAT RECOMMENDATION...)
(BA-BUMP BA-BUMP)

#181 | Carving Demons



(YOSHIOKA KEMPO)

SIGH

OTHERWISE, YOU'D BE LOOKING FOR YOUR OWN HEAD.
YOU WERE LUCKY YOU DIDN'T DRAW YOUR SWORD.
!!

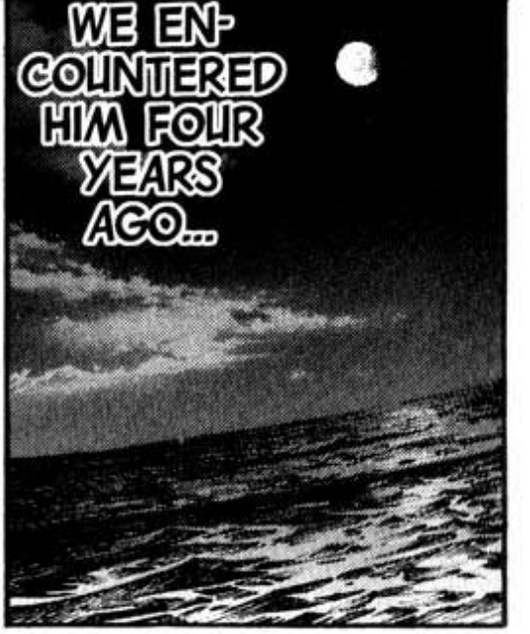
HE JUST SIGHED AND WALKED AWAY.
LIKE HE WAS BORED.

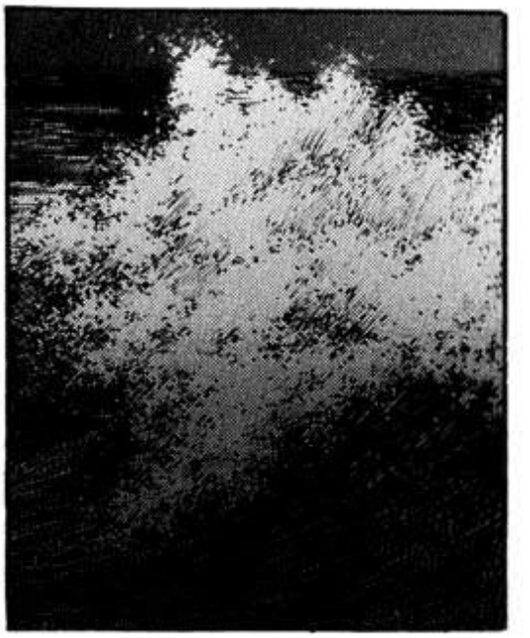
THAT WAS SASAKI KOJIRŌ.

IT WAS *HIM*.
THERE CAN'T BE TWO PEOPLE LIKE THAT...

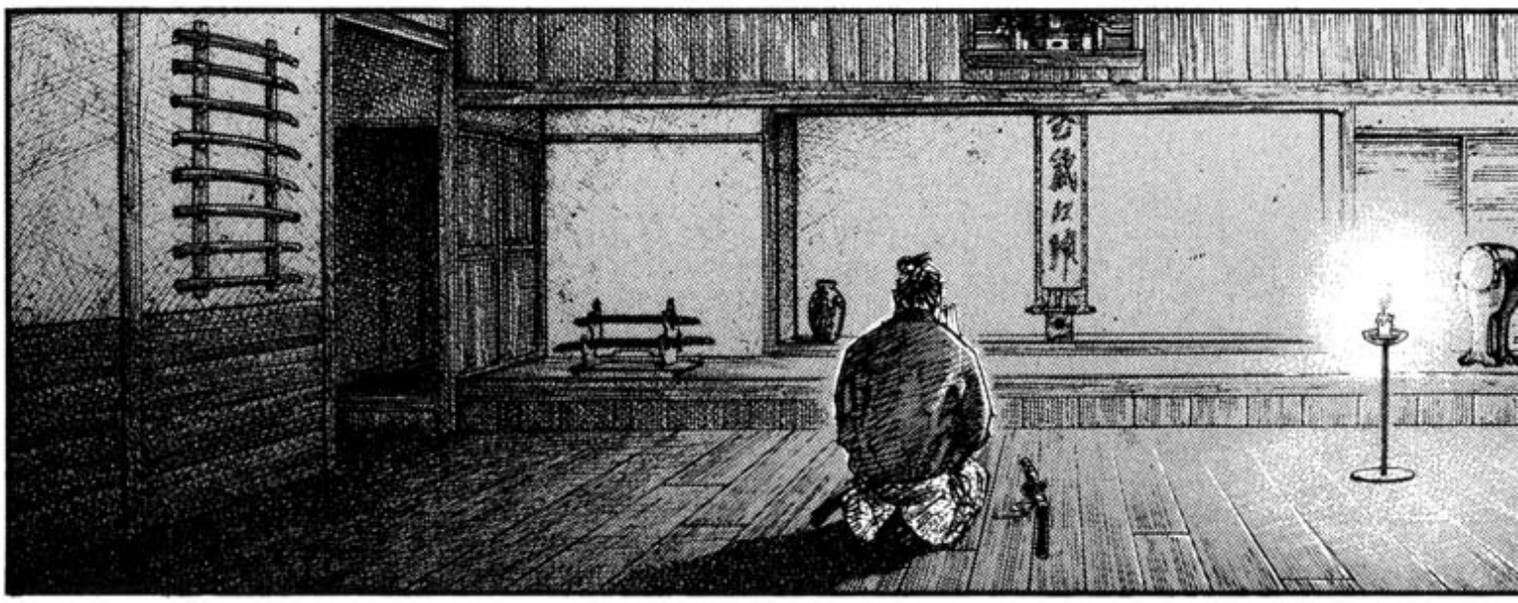
!!

HYUU


WE EN-
COUNTERED
HIM FOUR
YEARS
AGO...



SO
KOJIRŌ
IS IN
KYOTO
TOO.



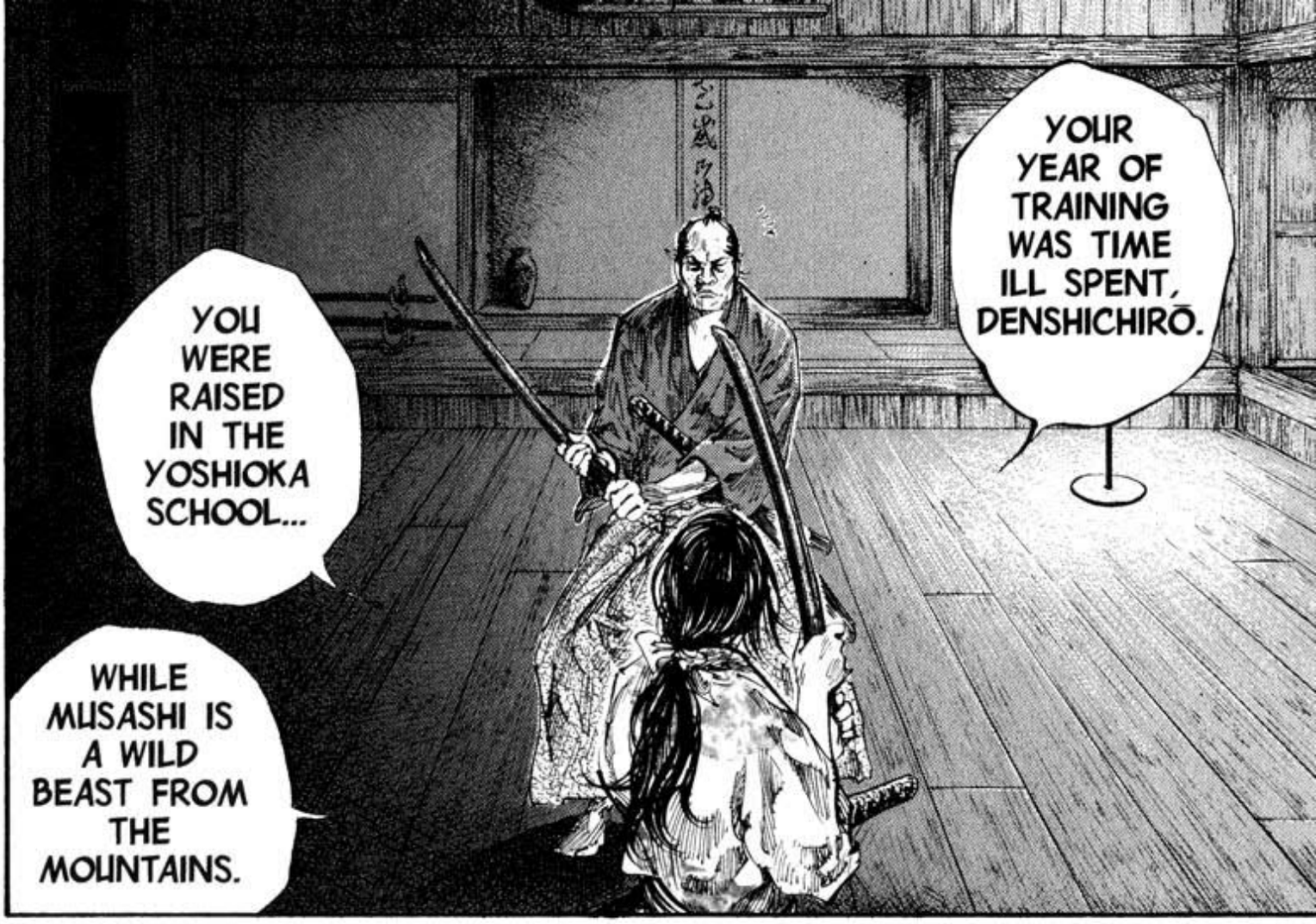
FWOOSH
NNGH.
FWOOSH
HAH!
HAH!
FWOOSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
PLIP
PLIP

SHAH!

HUF
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO STAND THERE LIKE THAT?
HUF
HUF
FLICKER
HMPH.
I'M HEADED THERE AFTER THIS.
HUF
HUF
AREN'T YOU GOING TO THE PLEASURE QUARTERS?
HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT!!
YOUR YEAR OF TRAINING WAS POINTLESS.

GRB
I DEMAND...
OR PERHAPS YOU'VE REACHED YOUR FULL POTENTIAL.
I WARN YOU--
I WARN YOU THOUGH...
PROVE YOUR POINT!!
...A TRAINING SESSION!!
HA HA!
ARE YOU READY, DEAR BROTHER ?!
I'VE NO GUARANTEES ABOUT MY CONTROL--YOUR LIFE MAY BE IN JEOPARDY.
GIVEN THE ANGERED STATE I'M IN...

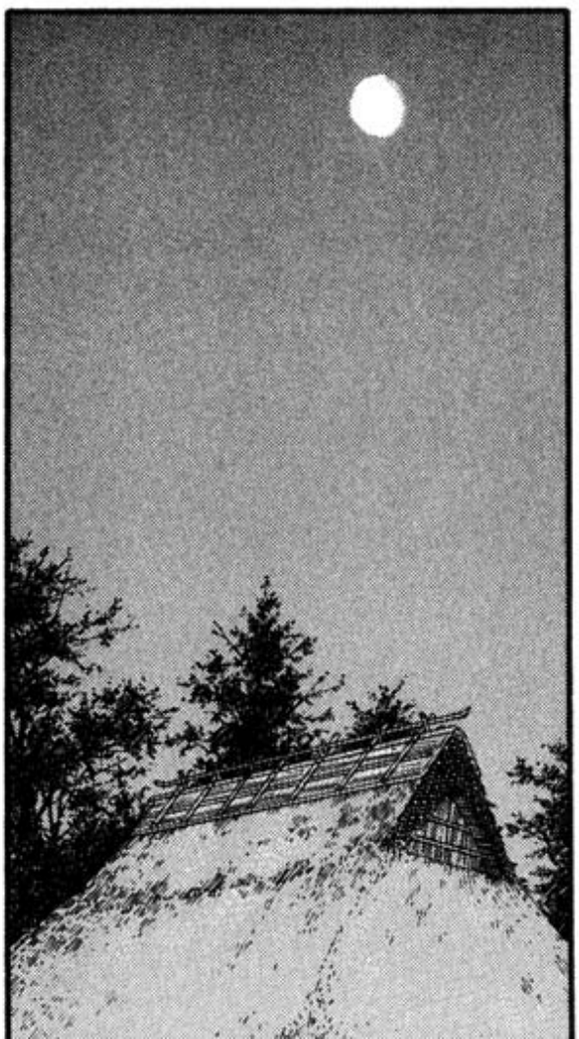
THUNK
NNGH!
TMP
TUNK !
THWAK
KLAK
NNGH!
THWAK
NNGH!
HMPH.
...!!


YOUR YEAR OF TRAINING WAS TIME ILL SPENT, DENSHICHIRŌ.
YOU WERE RAISED IN THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...
WHILE MUSASHI IS A WILD BEAST FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

WHICH ONE OF YOU IS LESS POLISHED NOW?
WEAK !!
YOUR STROKE IS TOO WEAK!!
...
HMPH.

TUNK
THWAK!!
...
YOU COULD'VE CUT HIM DOWN WHEN THAT FIRE BROKE OUT.
INSTEAD, YOU MADE A DATE TO MEET HIM AGAIN.

LIKE A SILLY LITTLE GIRL.
TUNK
KLAT
KLAK



I'M OFF TO THE PLEASURE QUARTERS.
I'M LATE.

HUF
HUF
HUF

SEIJŪRŌ ...

KRIK
KRIK
IT'S THE YAGYŪ'S ERA.
THE YAGYŪ...
...
STANDING BEFORE SEKISHŪSAI, I WAS NOTHING.
HAH!
...
I WENT UP AGAINST THE ENTIRE CASTLE AND DID NOT GO DOWN.
DOES THAT MEAN I WON?
I TRY SO HARD TO CATCH UP TO THESE OLD MEN...
...TO UNDERSTAND THEM.
SEKI-SHŪSAI.
IN'EI.

I WAS SO INTENT ON "FACING THE INVINCIBLE."
I HAD THE CHANCE TO FACE SEKISHŪSAI.
I WAS OBSESSED.
BUT I WORSHIPPED HIM AS A "SWORD SAINT" BEFORE I EVEN MET HIM.
HE WAS THE MASTER, SO HE HAD TO BE GREAT.

I THINK TOO MUCH ABOUT THE WAY OF THE SWORD.
I'M TOO CAUGHT UP WITH THE WORLD.

IT WAS NO MATCH.
HA HA HA
HAH, THERE'S NO WAY I COULD HAVE WON.
I'D ALREADY ASSUMED HE'D BE INVINCIBLE.
THERE WAS NO MATCH.
WHICH MEANS I DIDN'T LOSE.

THE SWORD IS JUST A SWORD.
IT'S JUST A BLADE MADE TO CUT PEOPLE DOWN.
A TOOL.

I KNOW WHAT THOSE OLD COOTS HAVE THAT I LACK...
I FINALLY GET IT.

HARUMPH

YEARS OF CUTTING PEOPLE DOWN.

THAT'S WHAT I LACK.
EXPERIENCE.

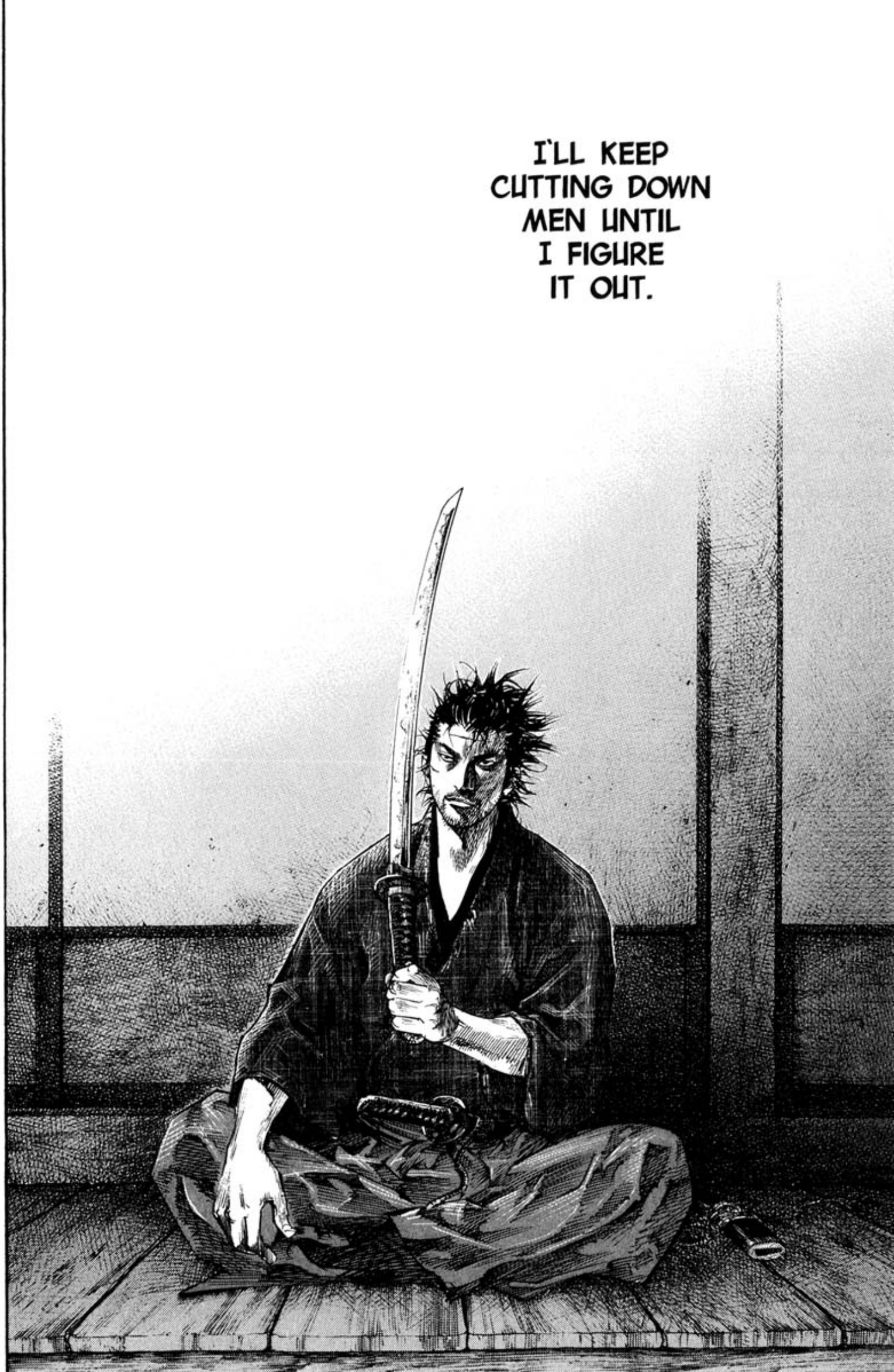
GASP!
HAH!
HA HA HA.
YARR!
.....
RIGHT?

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN CARVING ?
A BUDDHA ?
NOD
SIR...
...IT'S AWFULLY COLD TONIGHT, ISN'T IT?
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TO OFFER, BUT DINNER IS READY.

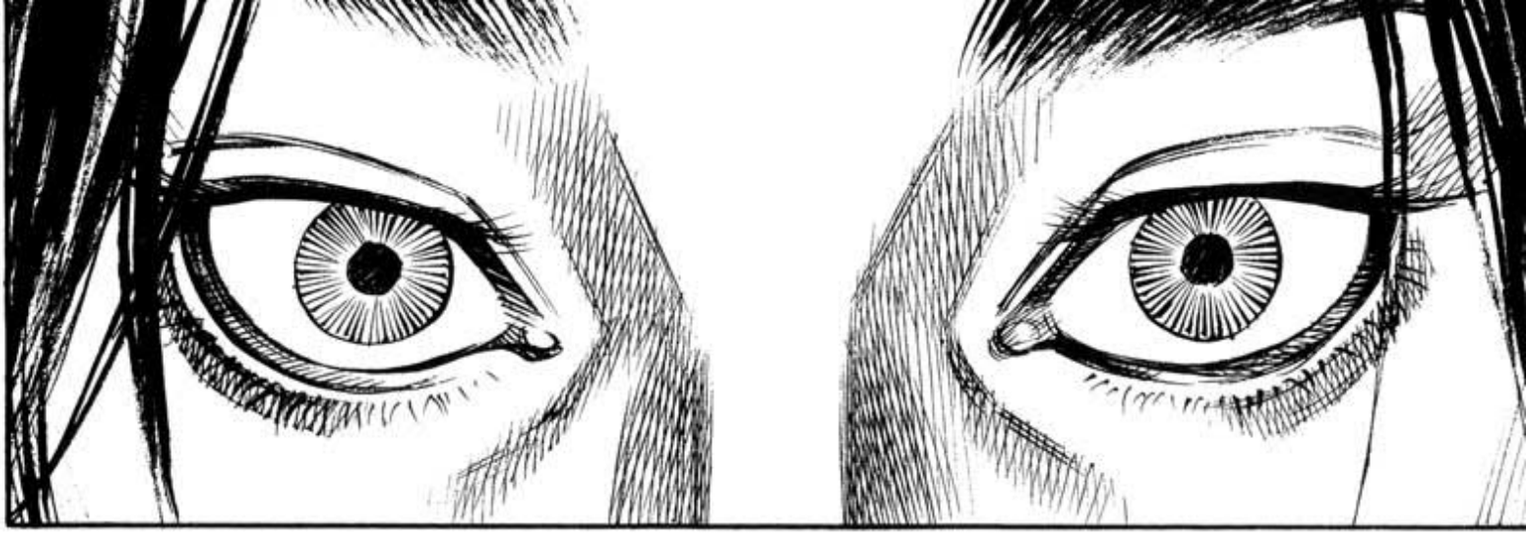
GASP!

HUH?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?
HOW DREAD-FUL.
.....
FUMP

.....
YOU OLD COOTS...
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU SEE?


I'LL KEEP
CUTTING DOWN
MEN UNTIL
I FIGURE
IT OUT.

THE SPIRAL OF DEATH AND KILLING...
HMPH
I'M NOT DONE WITH IT YET...
TSUJI-KAZE KŌHEI...
TIME TO EAT!
RRRR

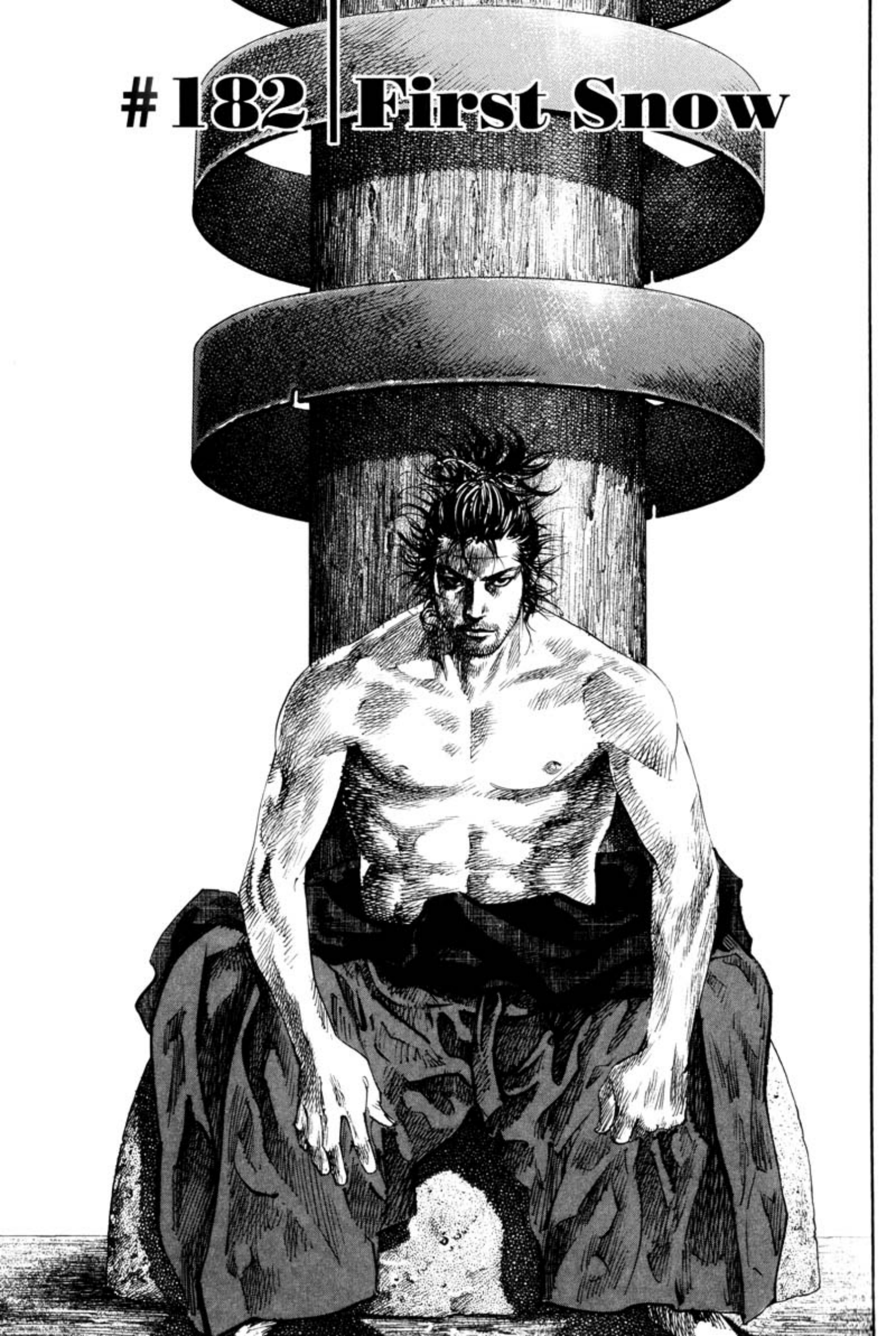


FCH
FCH
FCH

Vagabond

(I DIDN'T LOSE.)

#182 First Snow



FWOM
YOU STILL A VIRGIN?
HEY, AKEMI!

YOU'RE GETTING OLDER NOW. IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU FIND A PATRON.

I CAN'T WASTE HER ON A CUSTOMER LIKE YOU.
HUH? WHAT WAS THAT?
OH, NOTHING...

HMPH, SHE MIGHT END UP MARRIED TO THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA FAMILY.
RIGHT, AKEMI?

OKŌ!!
I JUST WORK IN FRONT HERE.
I WANT TO BUY AKEMI!!

OH DEAR. I'M SORRY, AKEMI DOES NOT DO THAT TYPE OF THING.
COME ON, I'M ONE OF YOUR BEST CUSTOM-ERS.

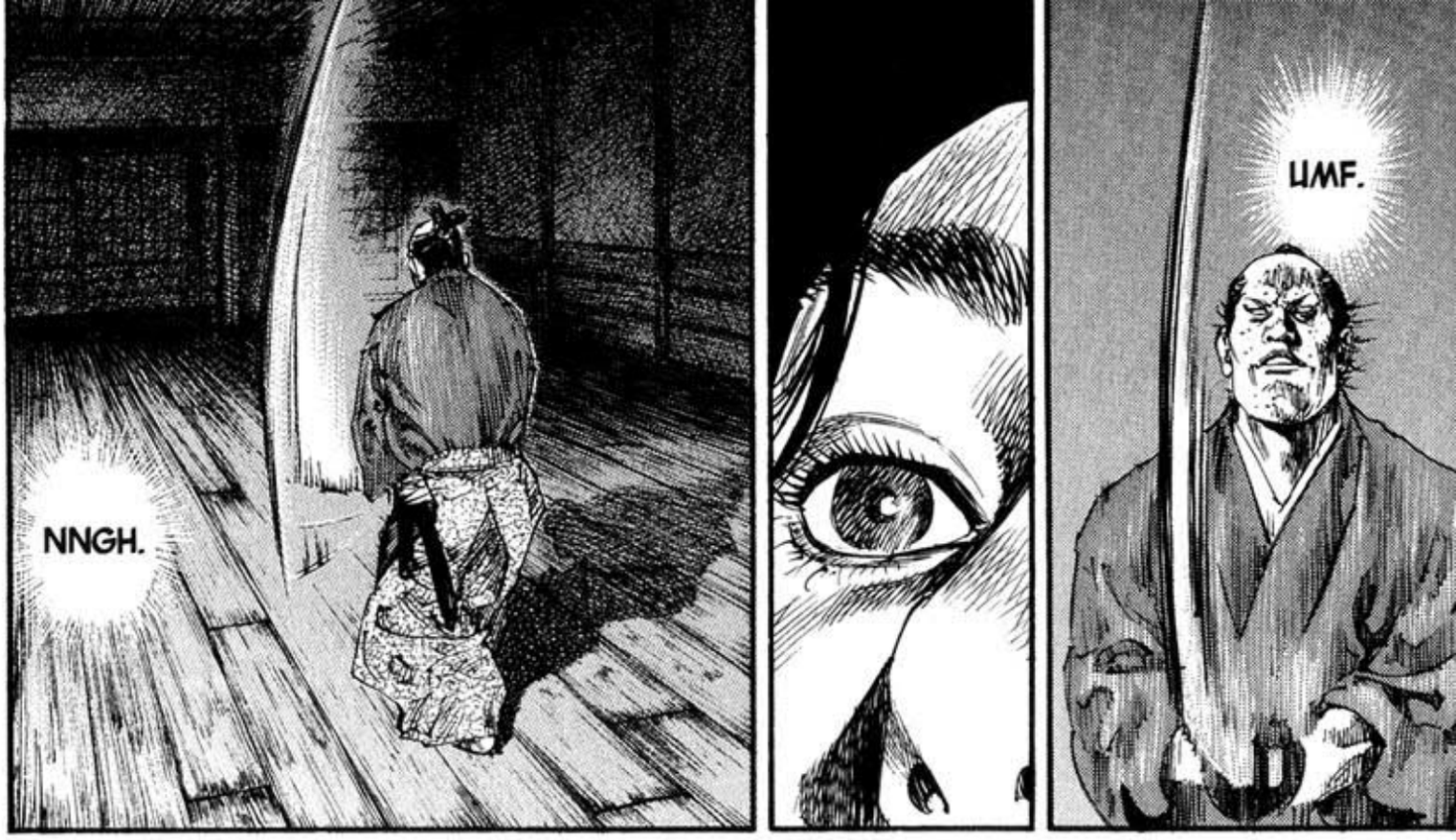
MARRY INTO THE YOSHIOKA FAMILY?
SIGH
YUK
I'M TIRED OF THE OTHERS. SO, AKEMI, ARE YOU STILL A VIRGIN?
COME THIS WAY SHINEMON.
WE HAVE PLENTY OF OTHER GIRLS.
WHAT A LOOK ON YOUR FACE.
ZHOOP
GASP
MOTHER, WHY ARE YOU SO...?
...
HMM...
GOOD EVENING.
SENSEI
YOU'RE LATE.
IT'S STARTING TO SNOW.

IT'S OKAY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP QUIET.
AHH.

AHH.

MM...

BROTHERS ARE SO ODD.
THE PARENTAL BOND MIGHT BE CLOSER...
LOVERS MAY BE MORE INTIMATE, BUT...
NNGH.


NNGH.
UMF.

...MY BROTHER'S ARM WAS EVER SLICED OFF...
IF, FOR EXAMPLE...

...I WOULD FEEL THE PAIN JUST AS IF IT WERE MY VERY OWN.

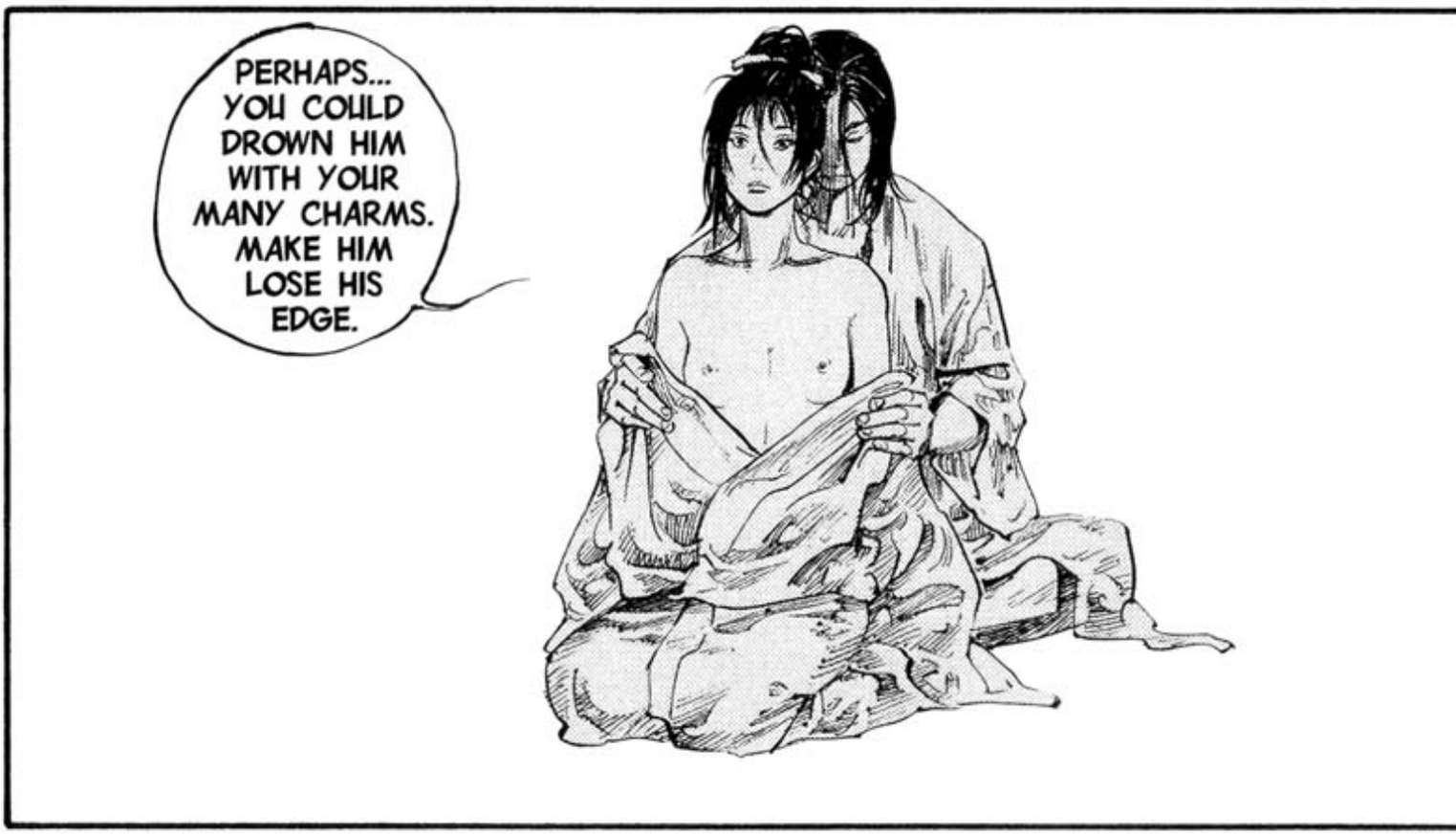
.....

I SAW THE POST.
IS YOUR BROTHER GOING TO FIGHT TAKEZŌ?
IT'S MUSASHI.

HE USED TO BE CALLED TAKEZŌ.
YOU KNOW HIM?

ALL THE MORE SO BECASE HE IS SO OBSESSED WITH BESTING ME.

A LITTLE...

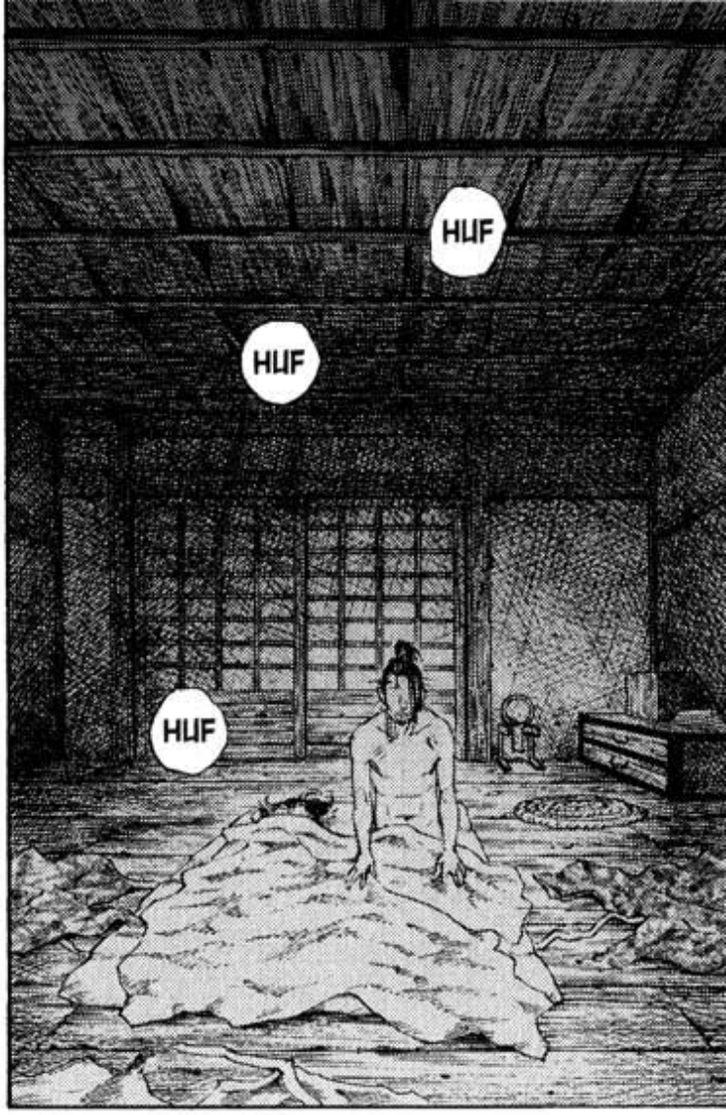

PERHAPS... YOU COULD DROWN HIM WITH YOUR MANY CHARMS. MAKE HIM LOSE HIS EDGE.

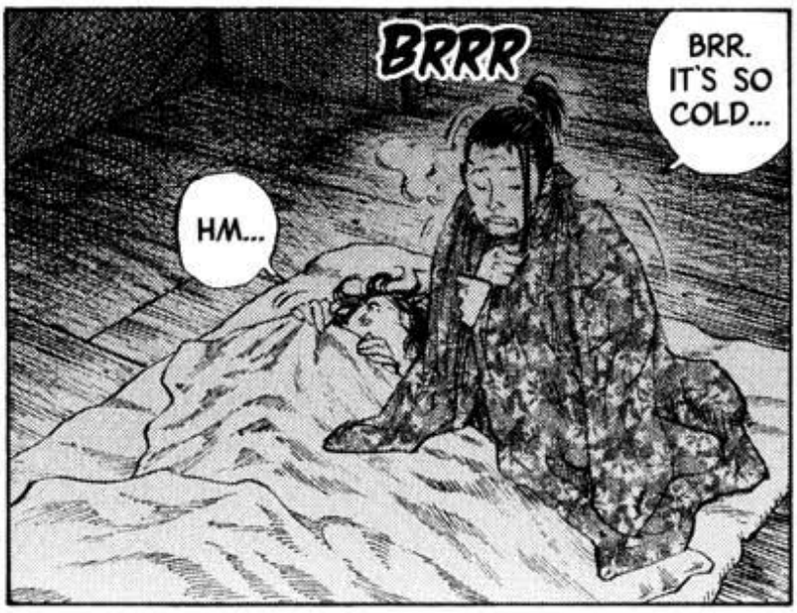
AH, FORGET I SAID THAT...
WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THINGS FOR WHAT THEY REALLY ARE?
MOTHER...
MARRY INTO THE YOSHIOKA FAMILY?

THE SON OF A MISTRESS ?

THAT'S RIGHT. HOW COULD HE BE OSUGI'S AT HER AGE?

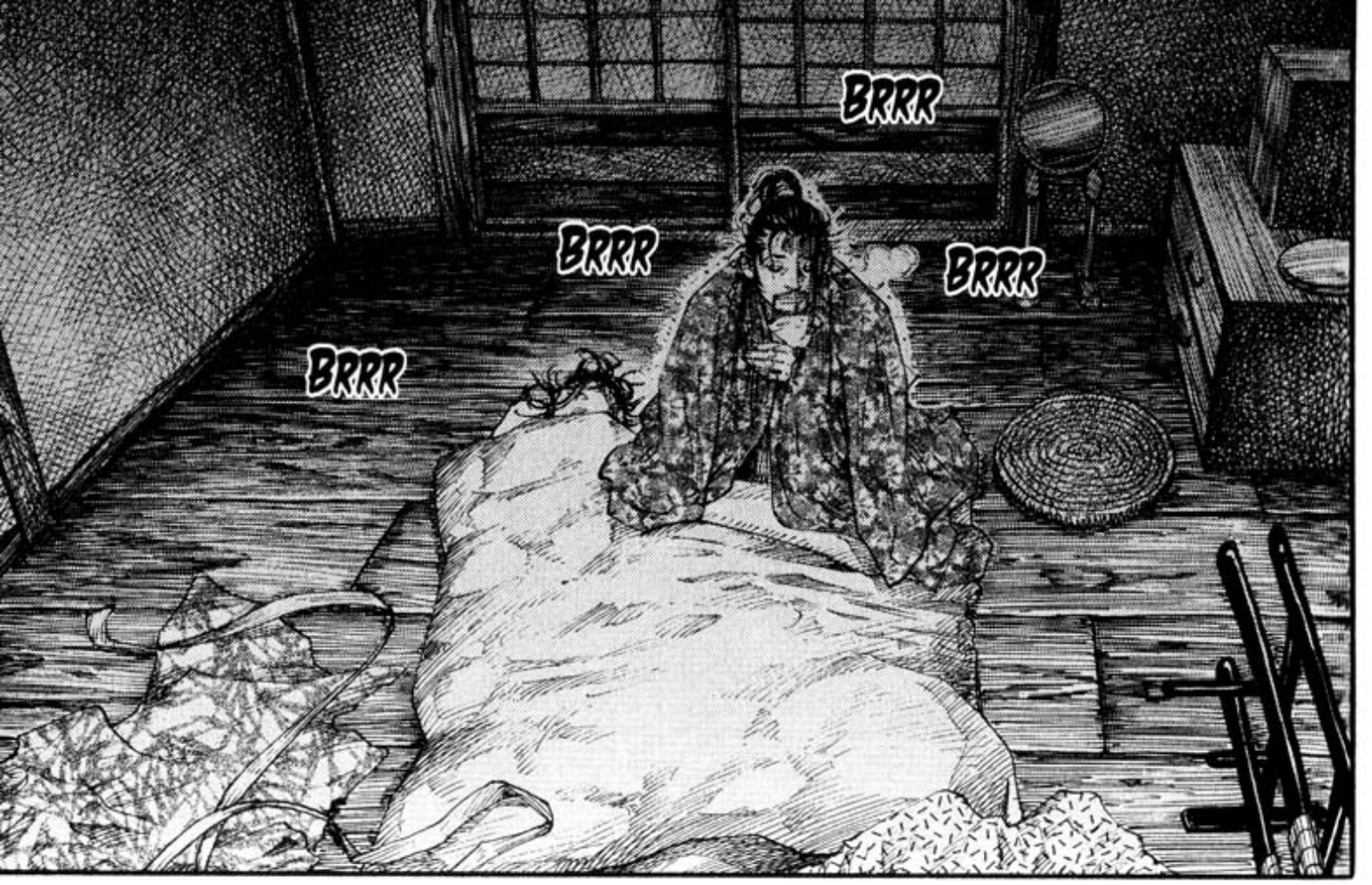
.....


HUF
HUF
HUF


BRRR
BRR. IT'S SO COLD...
HM...

...

SCHNORR
SCHNORR
HOMELY ...
HMPH, IS *THAT* WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE?


BRRR
BRRR
BRRR
BRRR

LET ME TELL YOU.

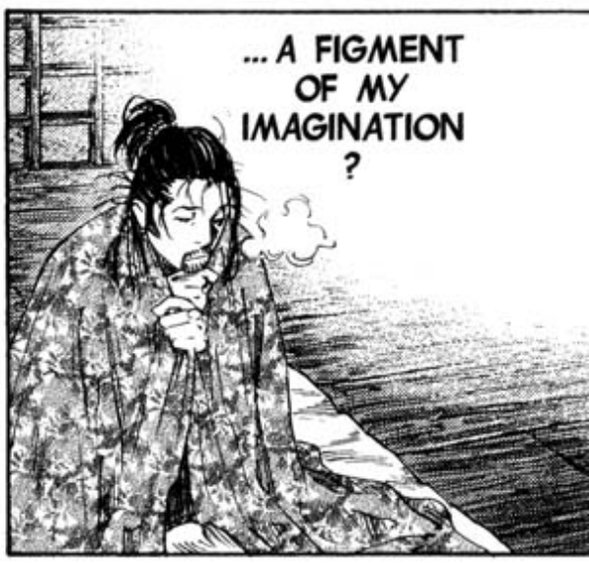
CHILD OF A MISTRESS.

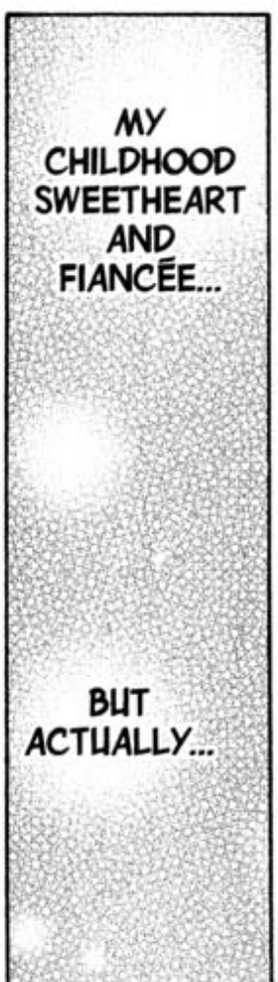
GLARE
YOU'RE THE CHILD OF A MISTRESS.

YOU'RE NOT HER REAL SON.
MATAHACHI...

THAT WAS... A CHILDHOOD MEMORY.
OR WAS IT JUST...

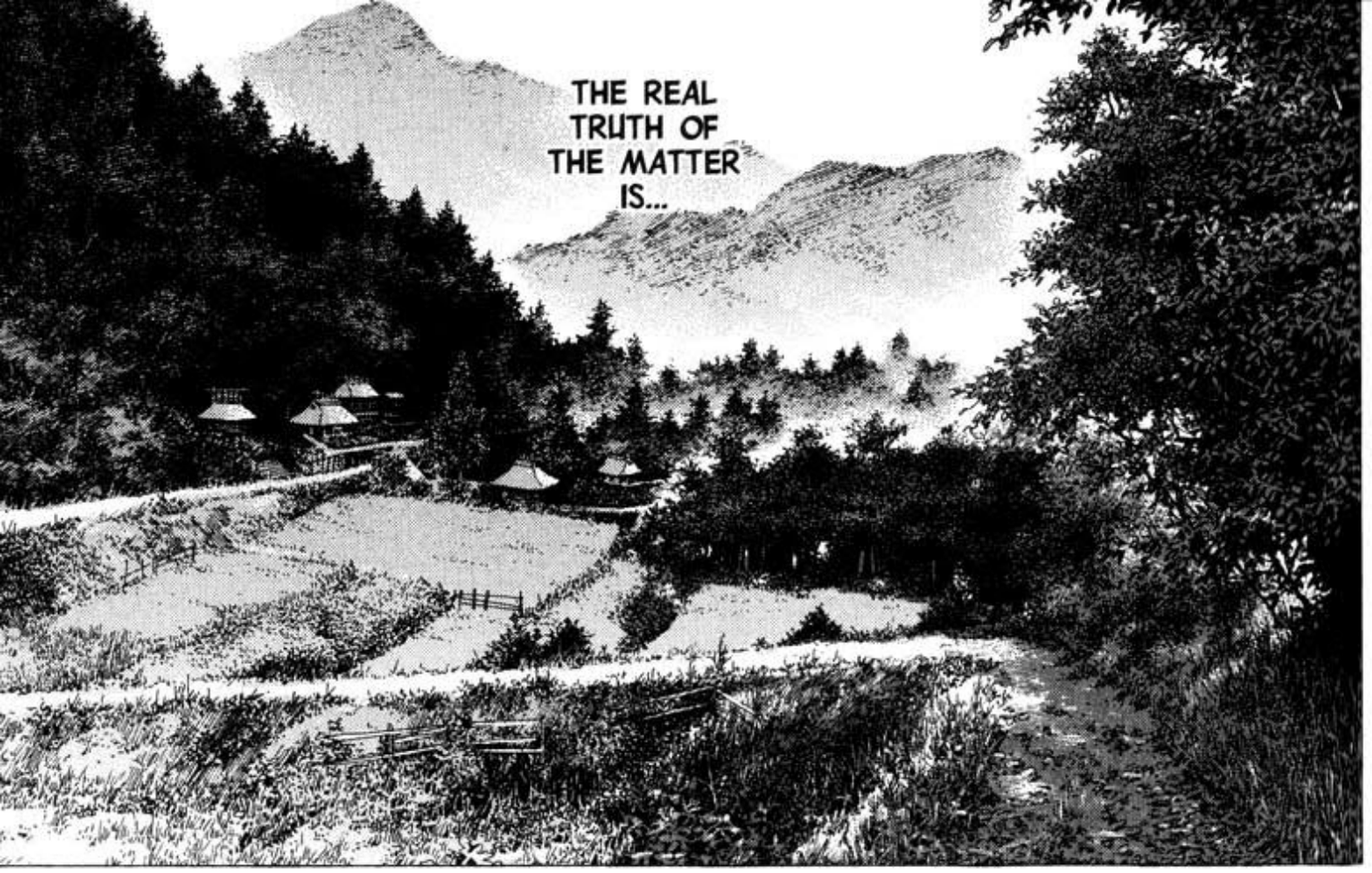
I WONDER WHICH IT IS.


... A FIGMENT OF MY IMAGINATION ?


MY CHILDHOOD SWEETHEART AND FIANCÉE...
BUT ACTUALLY...

OTSŪ...

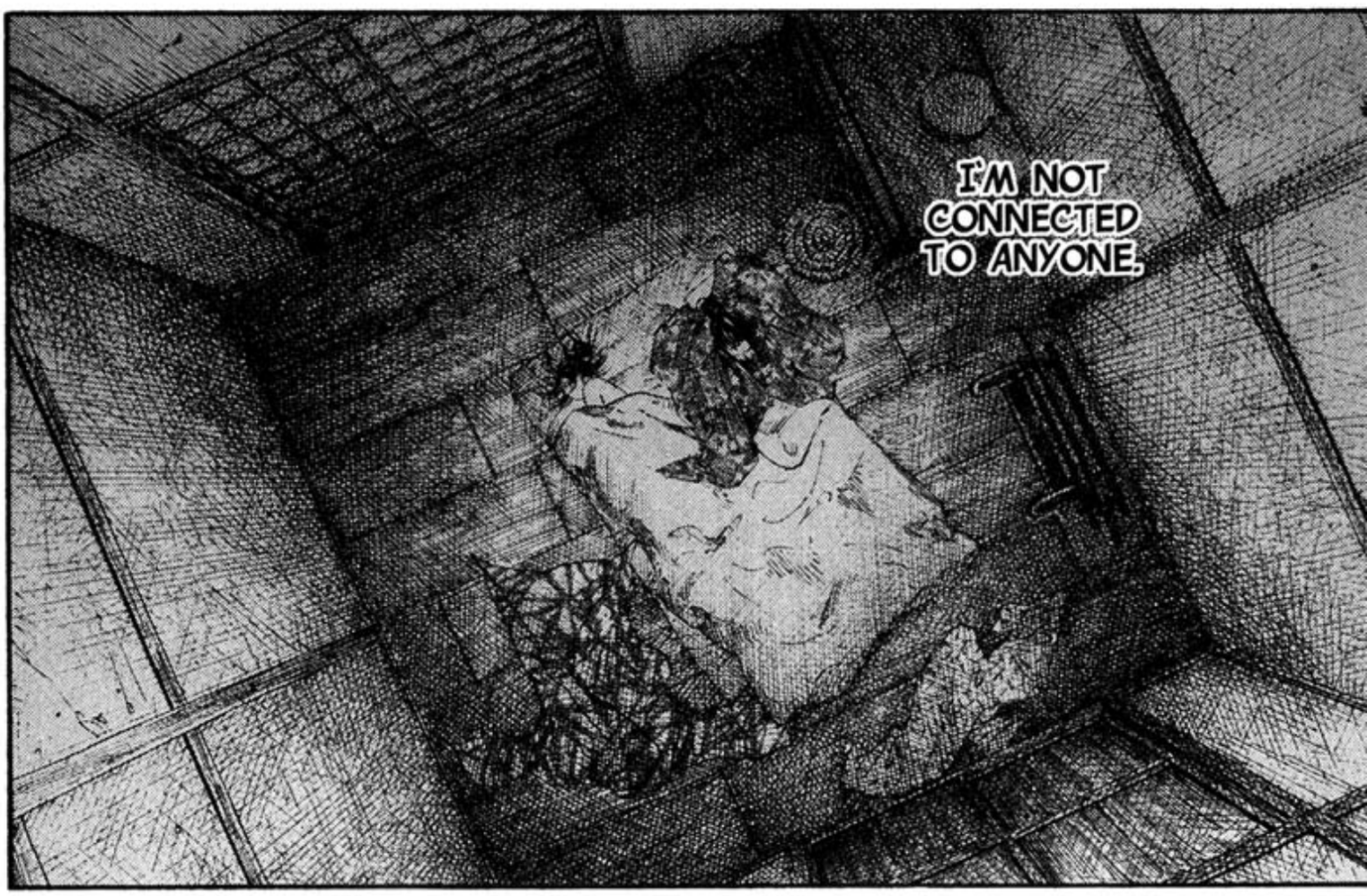
...


THE REAL TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS...

SHE MIGHT NOT HAVE REALIZED IT HERSELF, BUT I KNEW.

SHE'S MORE CONNECTED TO TAKEZŌ THAN TO ME.

I HAVE NO ONE. NO ONE AT ALL.


I'M NOT CONNECTED TO ANYONE.

HOW COULD YOU SLEEP SO WELL NEXT TO A COMPLETE STRANGER!!
IDIOT!
SCHNOR

SCHNOR
SCHNOR
SCHNOR

FWOOSH
I'M OFF TO KYOTO.
BRR, IT'S FREEZ-ING.
SCHNORR
SCHNORR
I WANT SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ME.
THEY CAN PUT ME DOWN. I DON'T CARE. JUST WANT TO TALK TO...
FICH
FICH
FICH
I WANT TO SEE SOMEONE ...
OKŌ, AKEMI, ANYONE WILL DO.
...SOMEONE WHO WON'T CALL ME KOJIRŌ...
SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ME AS MATAHACHI...
URGH.
FWOOSH

...?

SPLISSH
PLISH

PLISH
SPLOSH

PLISH
ISN'T HE COLD?!
HE'S THE ONE WHO'S SUPPOSED TO FIGHT THE YOSHIOKA.
ANOTHER GUEST SAID HE'S A FAMOUS SWORDSMAN CALLED MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.
SPLOOSH
OH MY...
SPLISSH
BRR.
IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI NUMB TO THE COLDNESS OF WINTER?!
SOMEONE'S WATCHING ME...
THIS FEELING I'VE HAD FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS...
SOMEONE'S CHECKING ON ME...

HMM...

ACHOOO!

HE'S COLD.
NO DOUBT.

ACHOOO!
ACHOOO!

HE'S COLD ALL RIGHT.
AHA, SO HE IS COLD.

Vagabond

(IT'S FREEZING.)

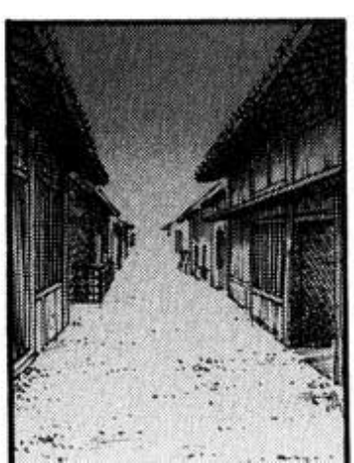
#183
The Same Moon

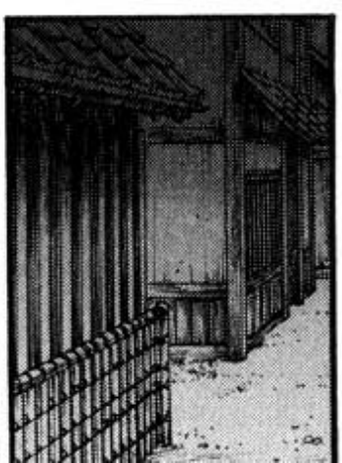
THIS IS SO SUDDEN.
NO...
I'D LIKE TO PAY MY BILL.
DID WE DISPLEASE YOU?

WHAT? YOU'RE LEAVING?
RIGHT NOW?
YES.

COULD YOU PACK ME SOME RICE BALLS FOR THE ROAD?
THANKS.

BRR
IT'S SO COLD.





.....

YOU MUST TAKE THESE WITH YOU.
UH, SIR...
.....

THANK YOU.

HM?
YIKES
THEY'RE SO CREEPY.

FWOOOSH

FICH
FICH

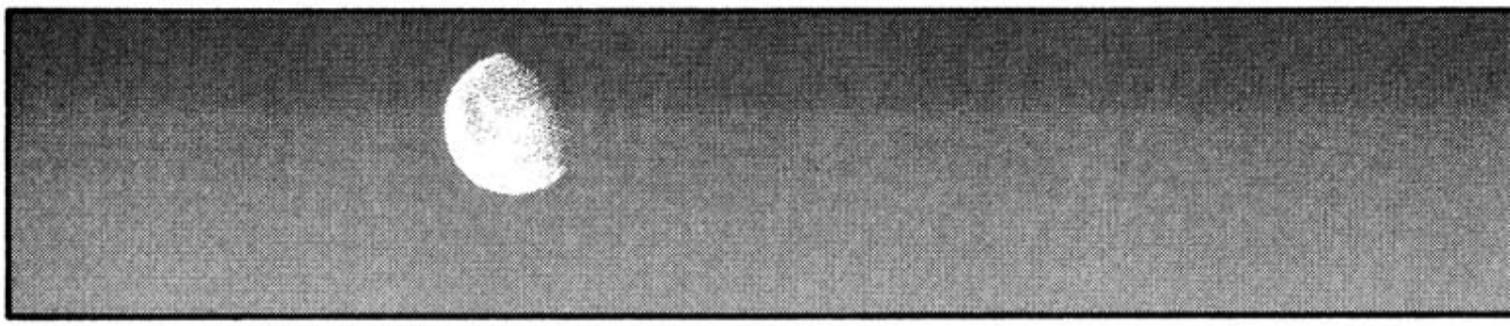
IT'S FREEZING COLD OUT HERE.
LET'S GO INSIDE.

THAT MIYAMOTO MUSASHI IS SUCH AN ODD FELLOW...
WHY DOES HE HAVE TO LEAVE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE?

.....

FWOOOSH

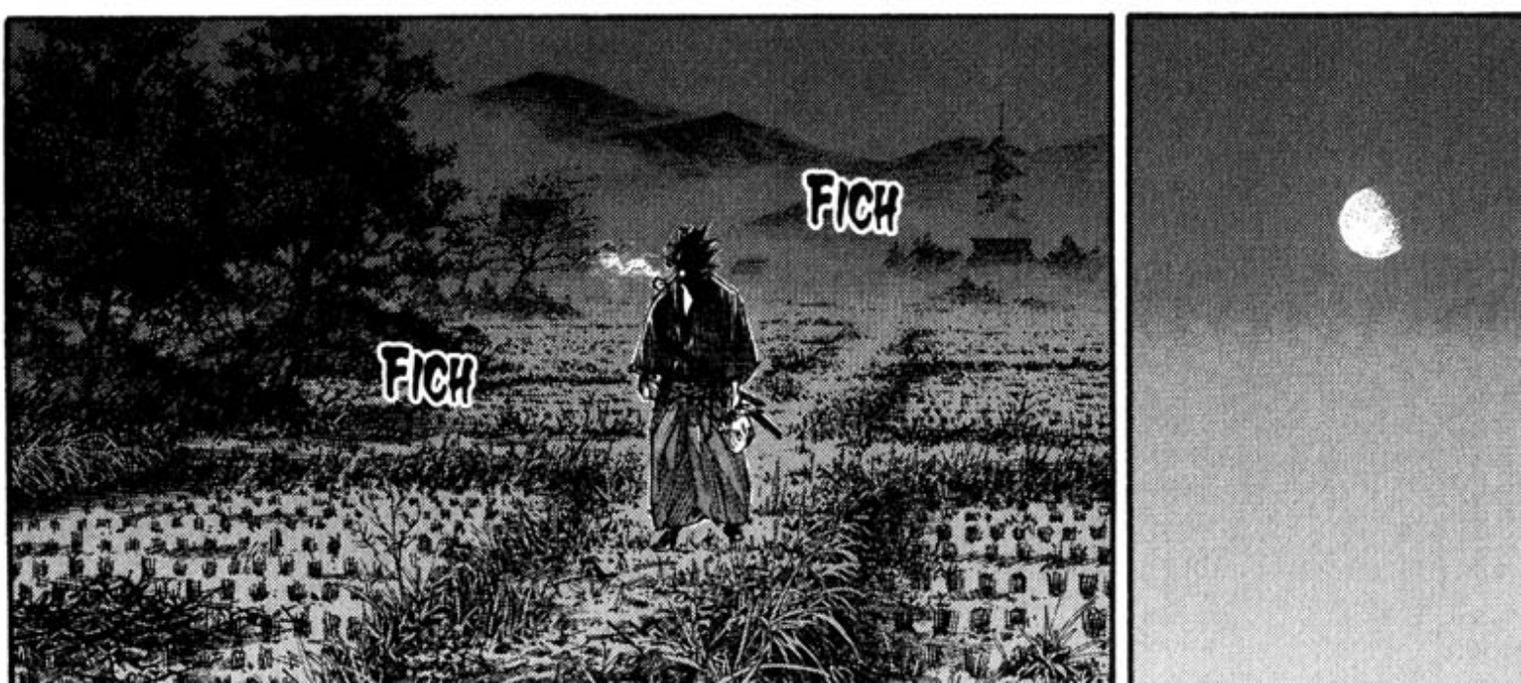
FICH
FICH



吉岡伝七郎
(YOSHIOKA DENSHICHIRŌ)
NINE MORE DAYS...
FWOOOSH

TWEE
LA LA
.....
MUSTN'T GET PRE-OCCUPIED...

HAAA...
BRRR
...

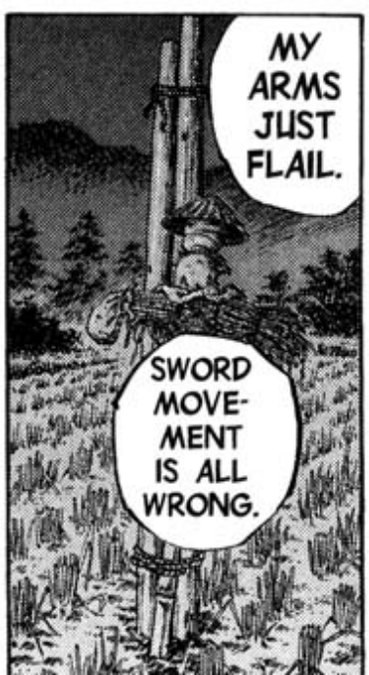

FICH
FICH

PREOCCUPIED.
FICH
FICH
FSH
.....

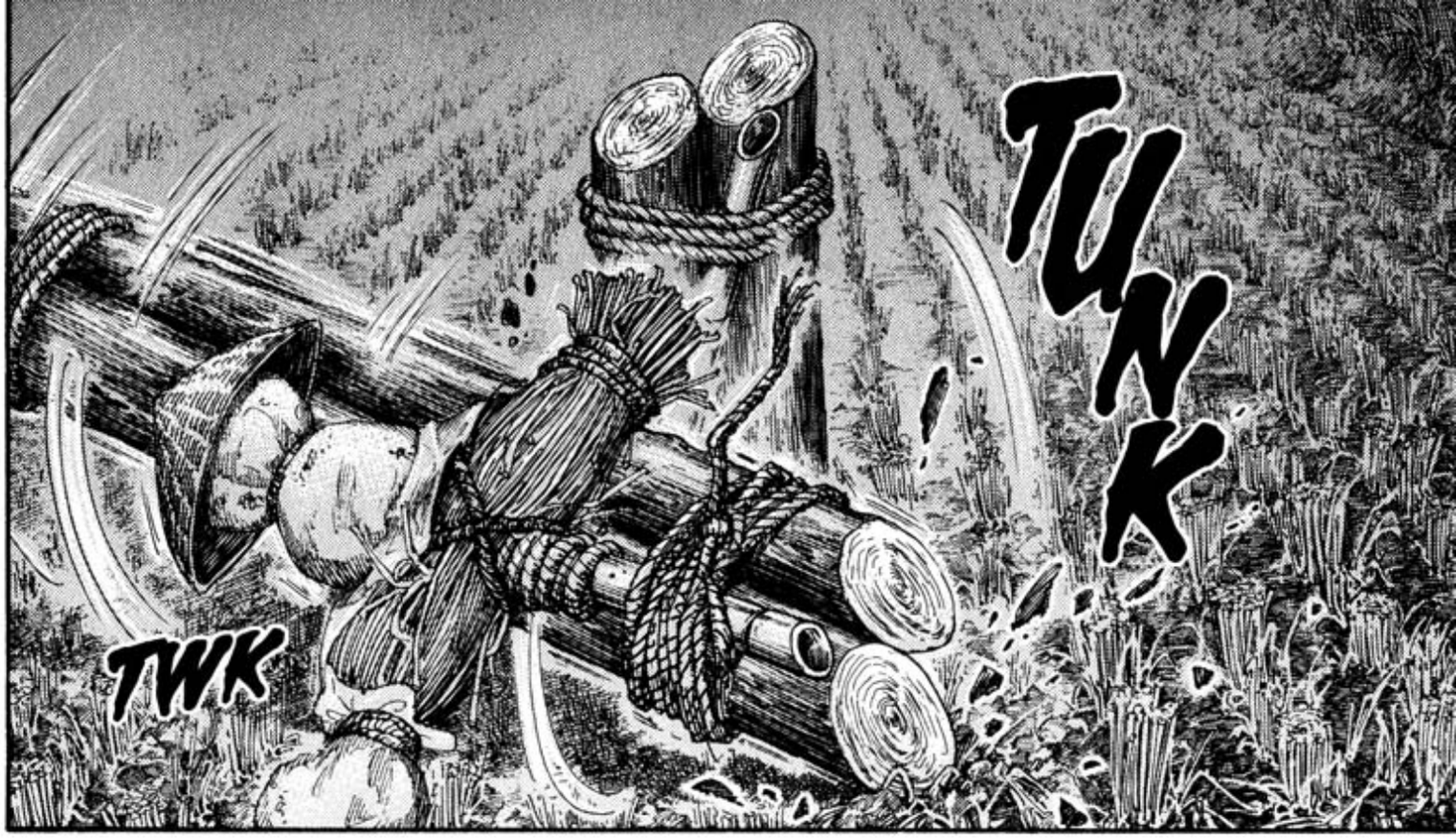
FWISH
FWISH

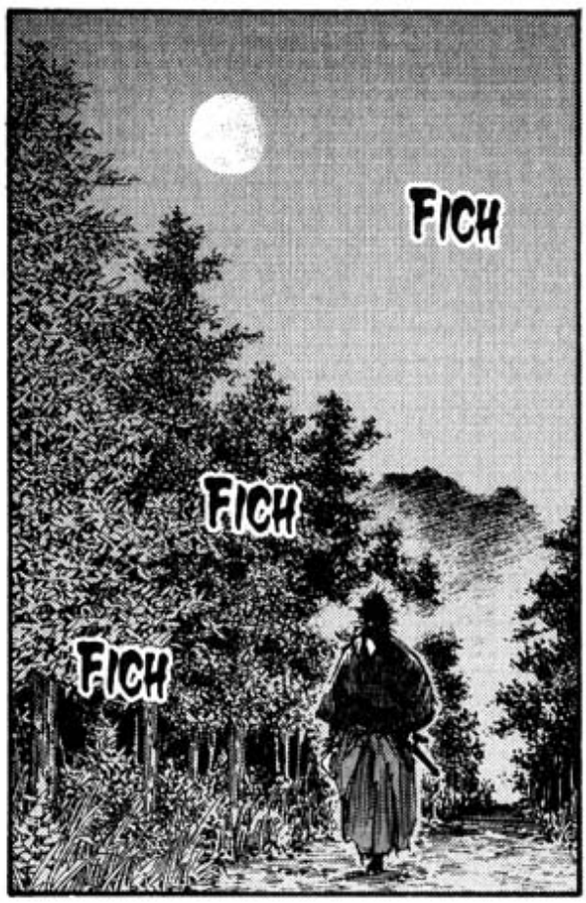
...
HYUUU

GRR
STIFF.
I CAN'T CUT ANYONE LIKE THAT!!
TOO SLOW !!

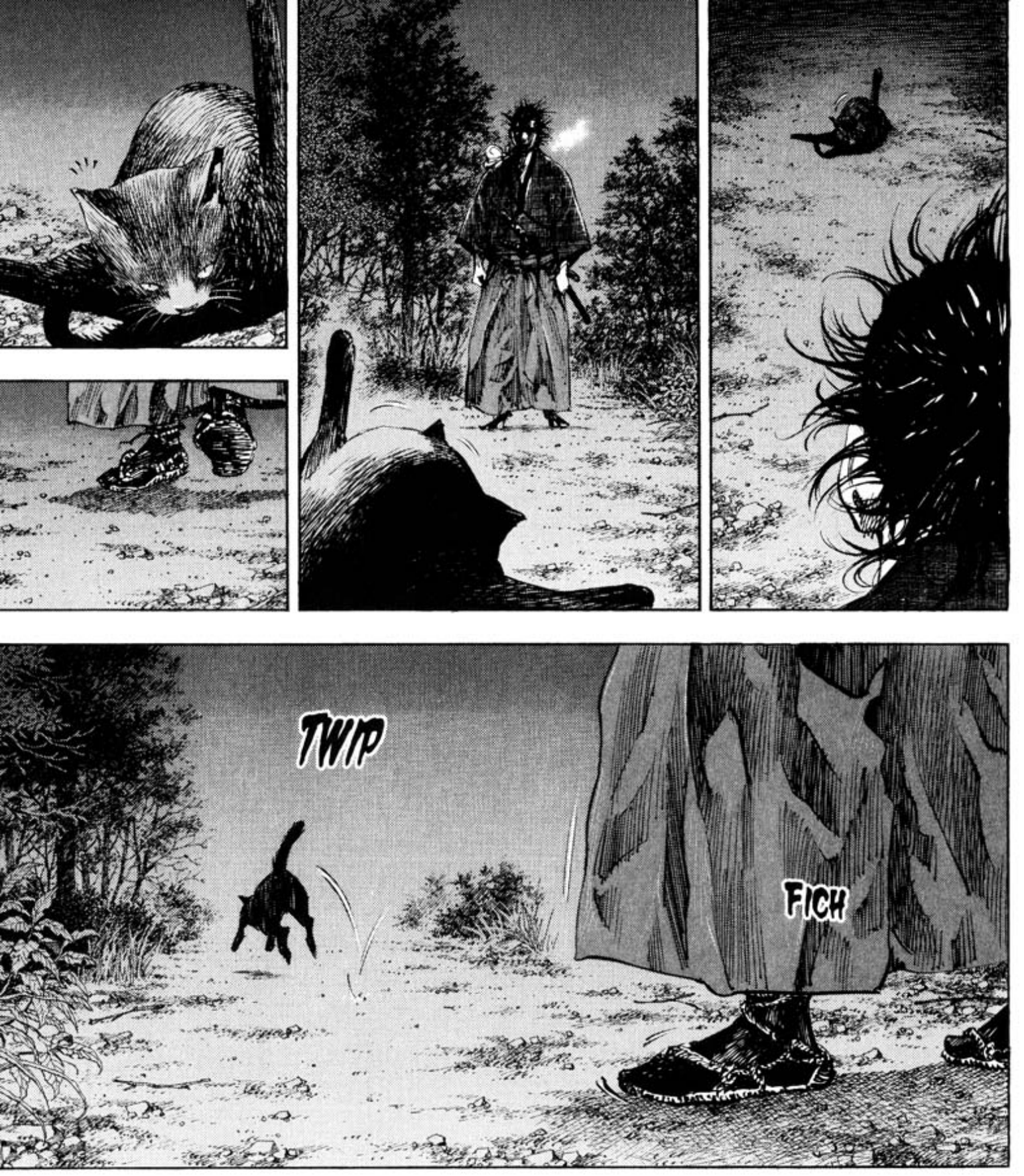

MY ARMS JUST FLAIL.
SWORD MOVE-MENT IS ALL WRONG.

THE MORE PREOCCUPIED YOU ARE, THE STIFFER YOU BECOME.
THE SLOWER THE SWORD.


TUNK
TWK

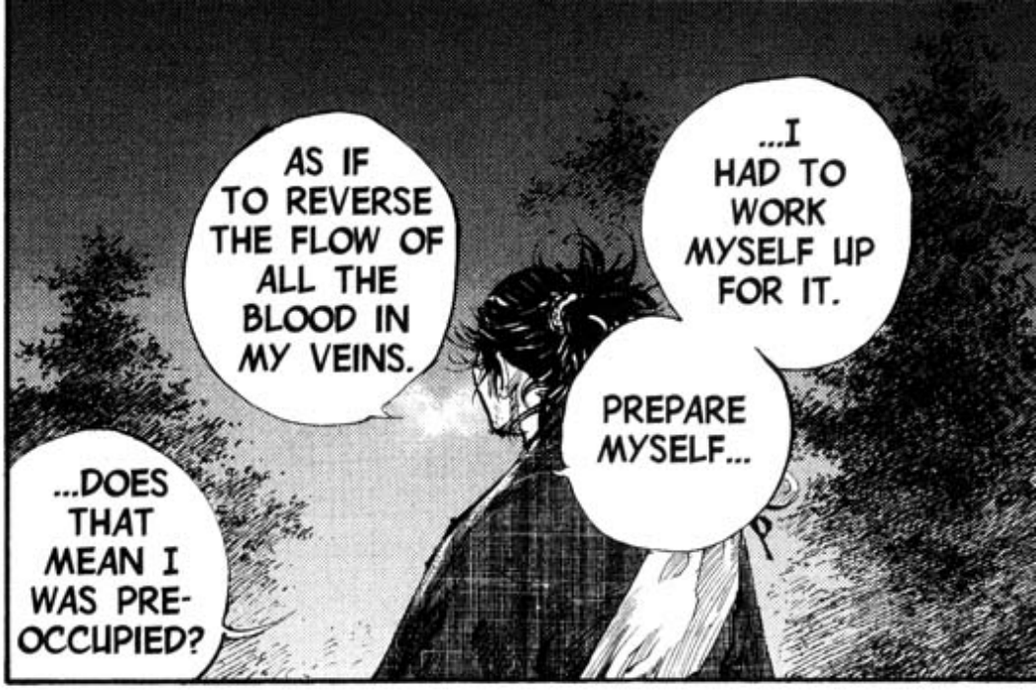

FICH
FICH
FICH

AMAZING I'VE MANAGED TO SURVIVE THIS FAR.

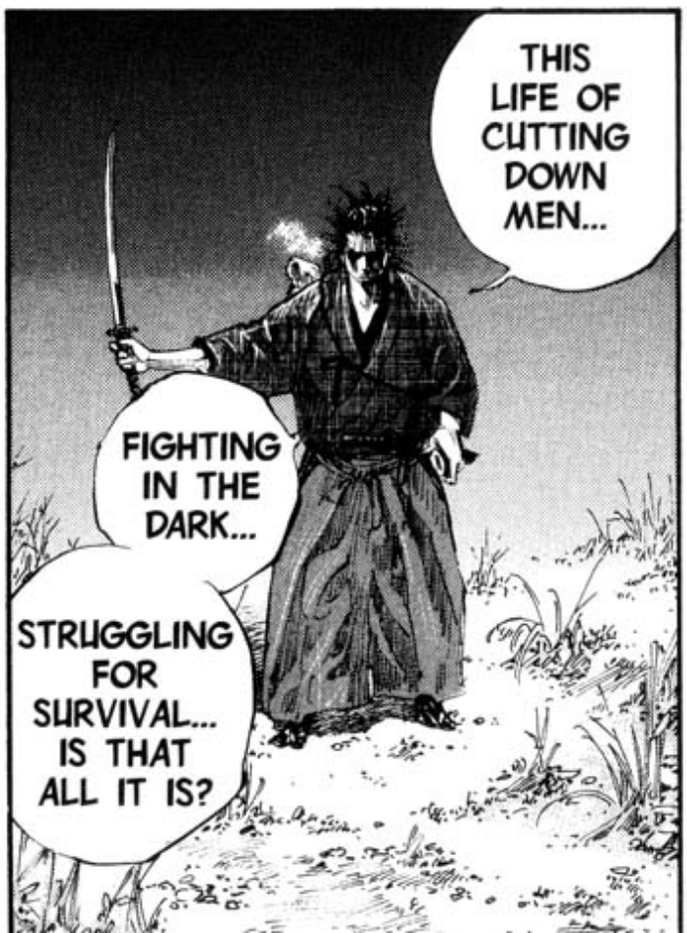

TWIP
FICH

EVERY TIME I SOUGHT OUT A MATCH...

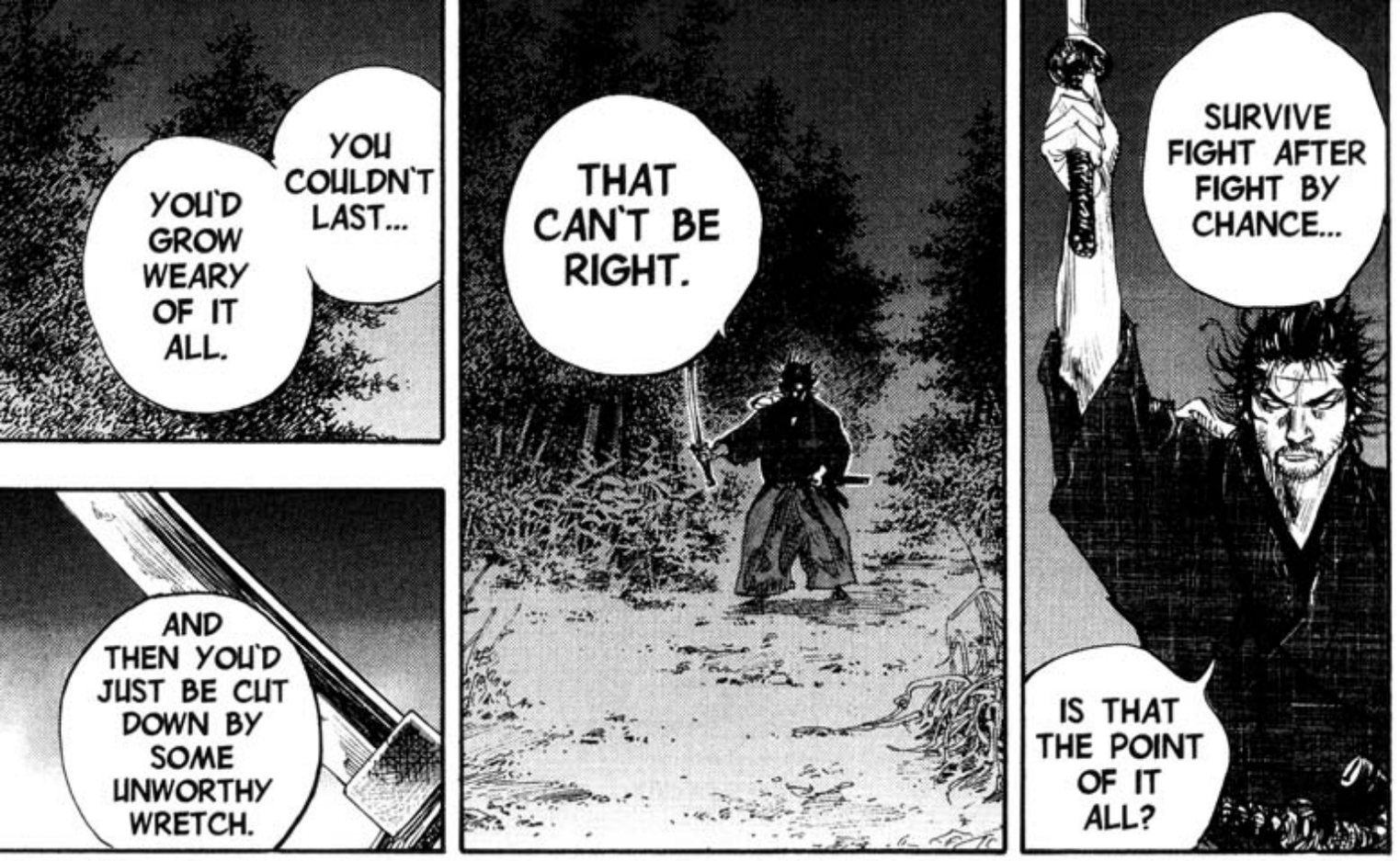
HMPH.


...I HAD TO WORK MYSELF UP FOR IT.
AS IF TO REVERSE THE FLOW OF ALL THE BLOOD IN MY VEINS.
PREPARE MYSELF...
...DOES THAT MEAN I WAS PRE-OCCUPIED?

I'VE BEEN DOING SOMETHING WRONG.


THIS LIFE OF CUTTING DOWN MEN...
FIGHTING IN THE DARK...
STRUGGLING FOR SURVIVAL... IS THAT ALL IT IS?

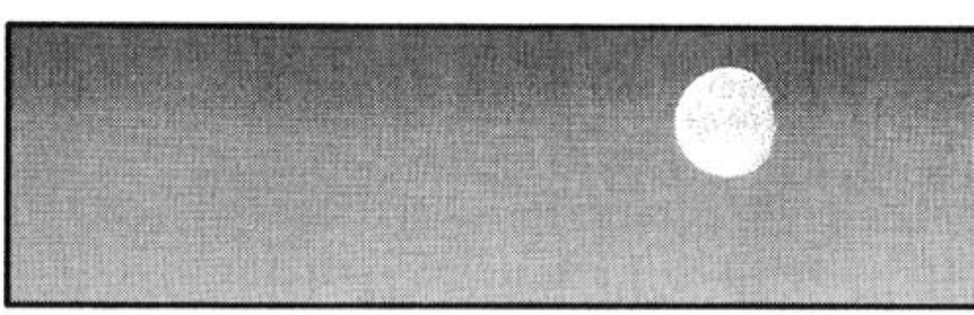
YOU OLD COOTS.


YOU COULDN'T LAST...
YOU'D GROW WEARY OF IT ALL.
AND THEN YOU'D JUST BE CUT DOWN BY SOME UNWORTHY WRETCH.
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT.
SURVIVE FIGHT AFTER FIGHT BY CHANCE...
IS THAT THE POINT OF IT ALL?

BUT THAT WOULD MEAN MY SWORD HAS BEEN UNTRUE.

DON'T GET PREOCCUPIED.
HUF

KRAK



NO MATTER WHO THE OPPON-ENT...
NO MATTER WHERE THE PLACE.

THOSE DESTINED TO WIN SHALL BE VICTORI-OUS.

KKRL
KKRL

KAAH
THOSE WHO DESERVE TO WIN...
...WILL WIN.
ONE CONTINUES TO CUT MEN DOWN TO REACH THAT STATE.

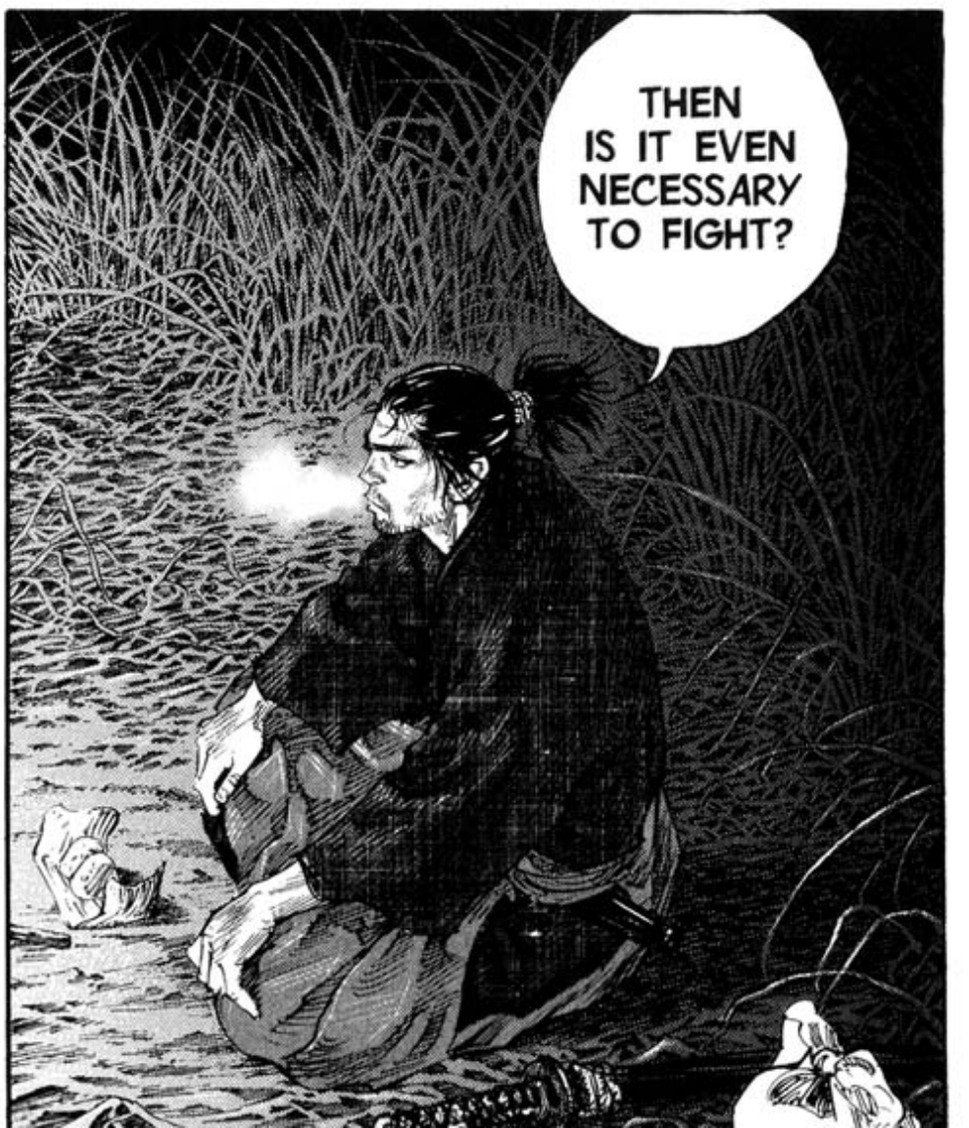
IF I'VE ALREADY WON BEFORE A FIGHT EVEN BEGINS...
HMM ...?
THEN...

.....

I MUST REACH THAT PLATEAU, AND THEN...

HARUMPH

...?

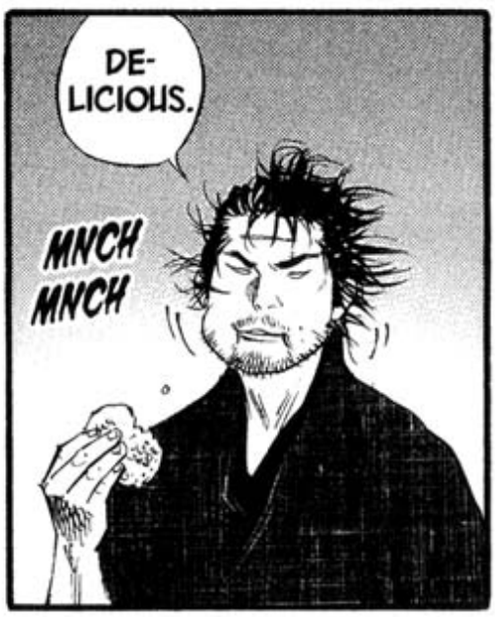

THEN IS IT EVEN NECESSARY TO FIGHT?

BONG
BONG

THE NEW YEAR.
IT'S THE NEW YEAR.
GONG
HMM ...
GONG
HOW FORTUNATE.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE WE LAST CELEBRATED THE NEW YEAR TOGETHER!
GONG
SHE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO IT.

GONG
DAMN IT...
WHAT AM I DOING?
GONG
GONG
GONG
THE BELLS OF NEW YEAR'S EVE, OTSU.
GONG

I WANT TO DIE.


DE-LICIOUS.
MNCH MNCH

CHOMP

DAMN IT...

GONG

Vagabond

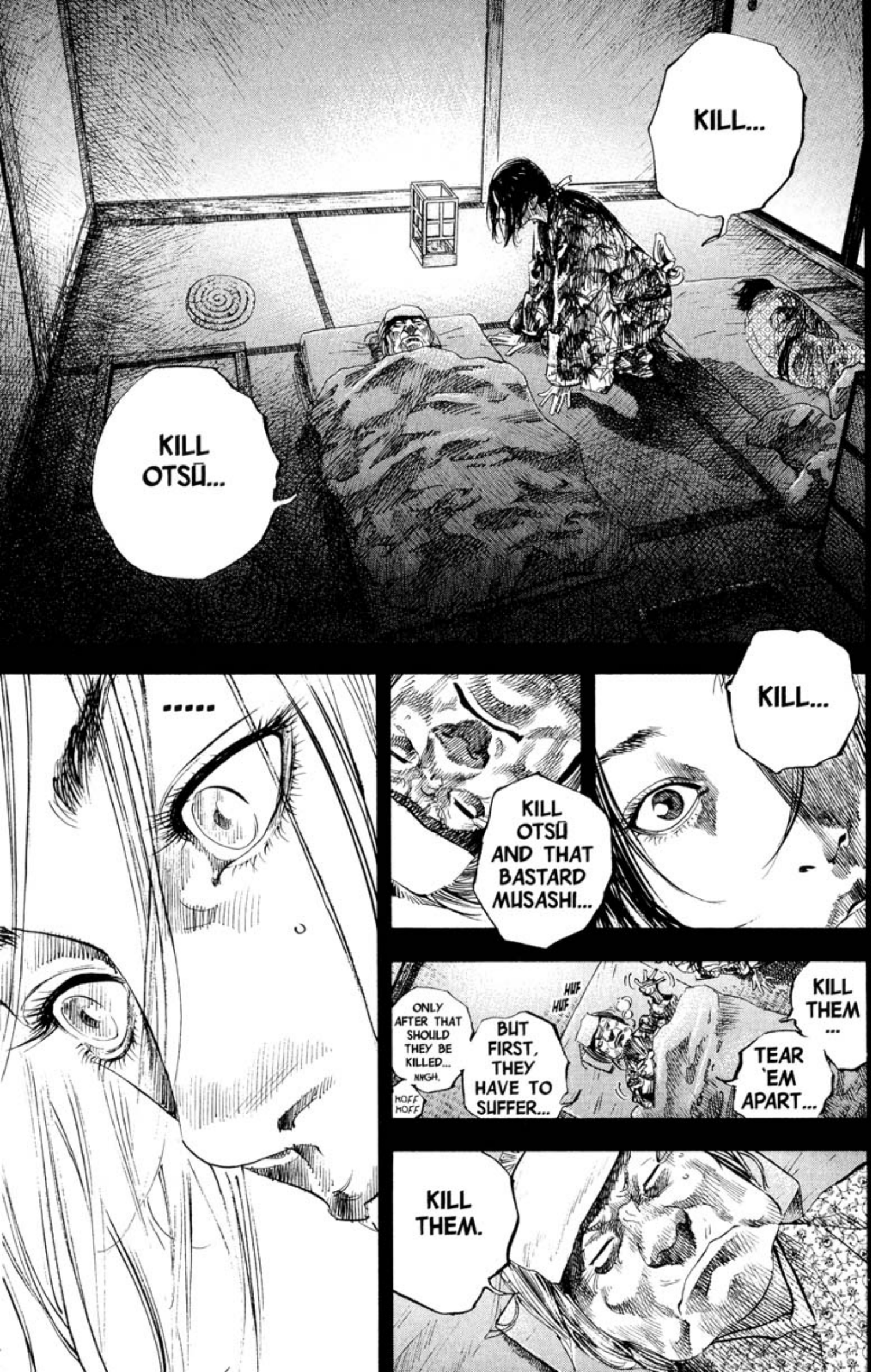
(GONG!)
(WE ARE BEHOLDEN.)

#184 Eagle and Ant

GONG

THAT'S SO UNLIKE YOU.
YOU WANT TO DIE? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, OTSŪ?

UMF.
SIGH
IT'S FREEZ-ING.
...


KILL...
KILL OTSŪ...
.....
KILL...
KILL OTSŪ AND THAT BASTARD MUSASHI...
KILL THEM ...
TEAR 'EM APART...
HUF HUF
BUT FIRST, THEY HAVE TO SUFFER...
ONLY AFTER THAT SHOULD THEY BE KILLED...
NNGH.
HOFF HOFF
KILL THEM.

ARR...
URR...?
HOW DARE YOU?!
GASP ...
WHAT?!
WHAT DID I EVER DO TO YOU?!

GASP! STOP IT!!
WHY BRING TAKEZŌ INTO THIS?!
WHY...
IT WAS YOUR SON WHO BETRAYED ME!!
URR...
HE BETRAYED ME!!
URR...

GASP!
HUF
HUF
HUF

FWOOSH
YOU'LL KILL HER!!
ARE YOU CRAZY?!

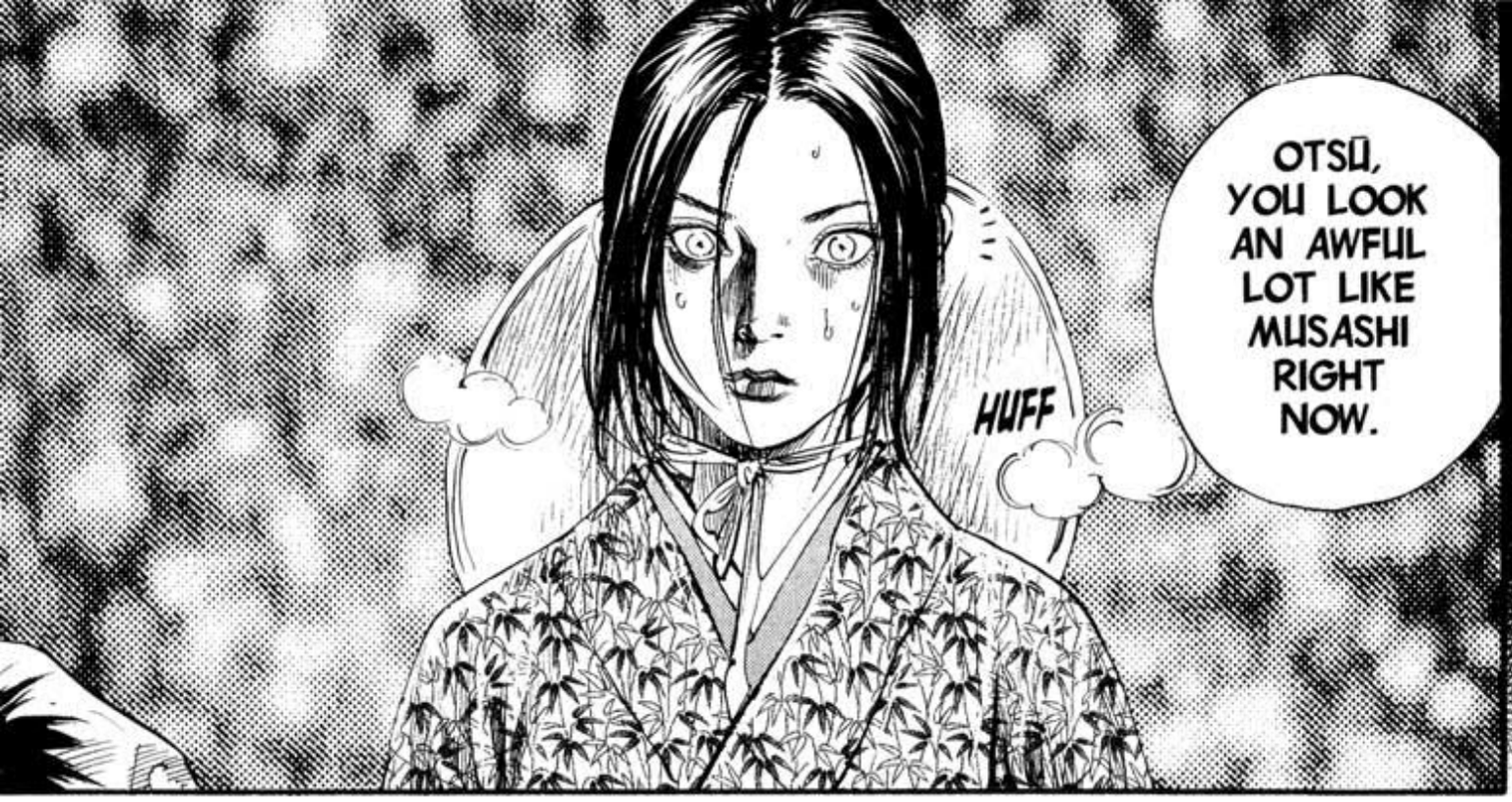
PHEW
GOOD. SHE'S STILL ALIVE.
COME ON, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!!

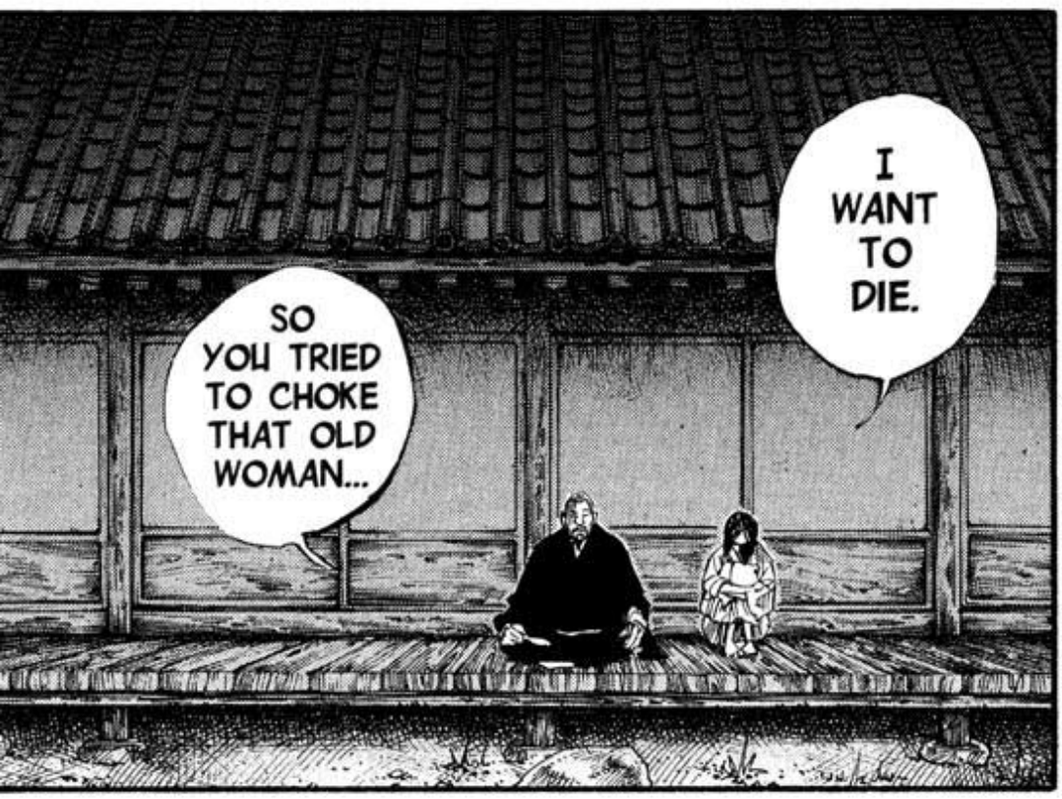
KOFF
HAK
KOFF KOFF

HUH?
FICH
HURRY!
THEY'LL CATCH US.
HURRY.

...BUT I FIGURED WE'D MEET AGAIN SOON ENOUGH.
WE MISSED EACH OTHER AT THE YAGYŪ CLAN...

HMM?
SWK
YOU WERE WITH MY MASTER!
RIGHT ?!
IT'S YOU!!


OTSŪ, YOU LOOK AN AWFUL LOT LIKE MUSASHI RIGHT NOW.
HUFF


I WANT TO DIE.
SO YOU TRIED TO CHOKE THAT OLD WOMAN...

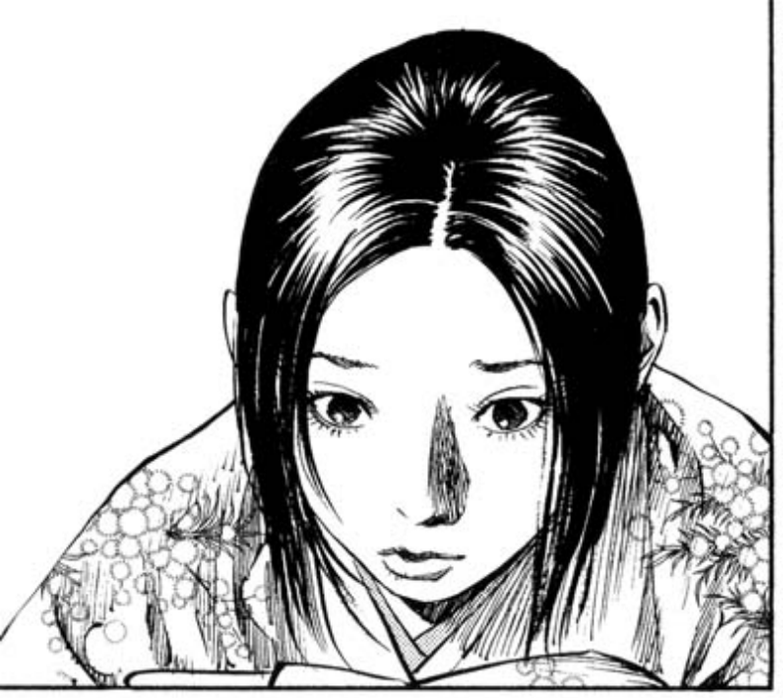
GONG

KNOWING THAT OLD LADY, I'M SURE SHE'S TRAMPLING ABOUT ON HER JOURNEY.
FORGET ABOUT IT.

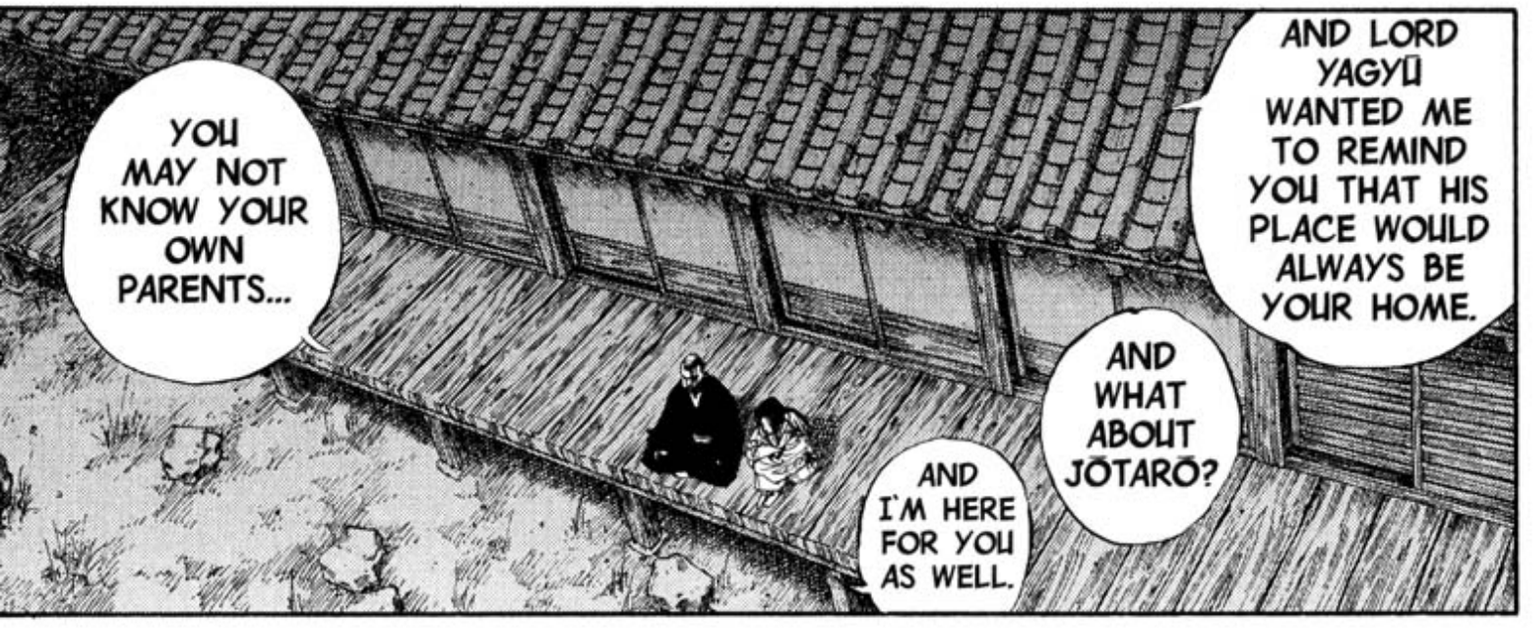
...BUT CHOKING HER WAS A LITTLE EXTREME.
I CAN UNDER-STAND HOW SHE'D GET ON YOUR NERVES...
BUT SHE WASN'T HURT. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.

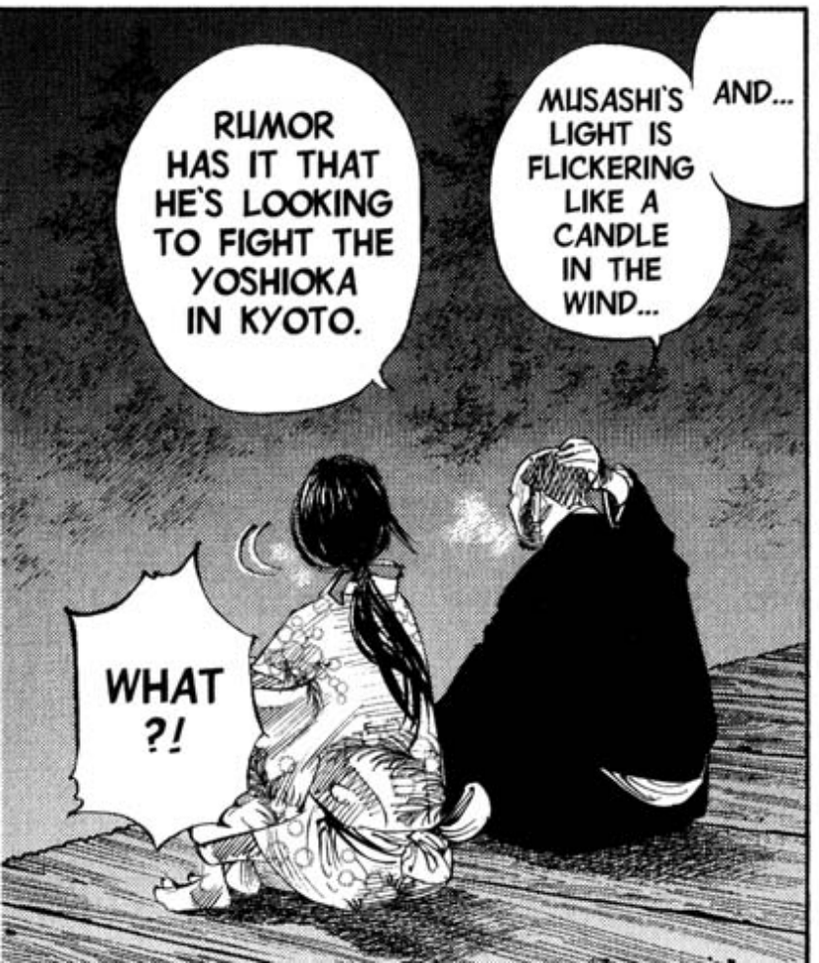
WHEN I DIDN'T HAVE ANYBODY, SHE PROVIDED ME WITH A FAMILY.
BUT...

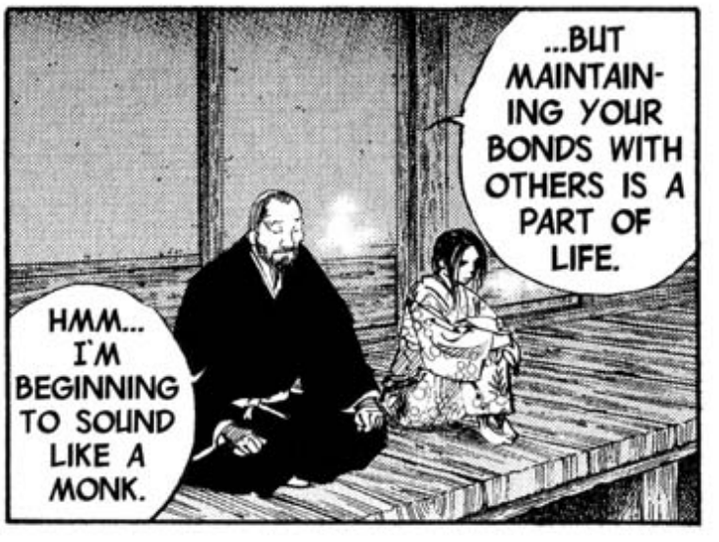
....IF I'D KNOWN I WAS GOING TO BE REJECTED LIKE THIS...
...I WISH I'D NEVER KNOWN THEM AT ALL.
I WISH I'D STAYED AN ORPHAN WITH NO TIES.



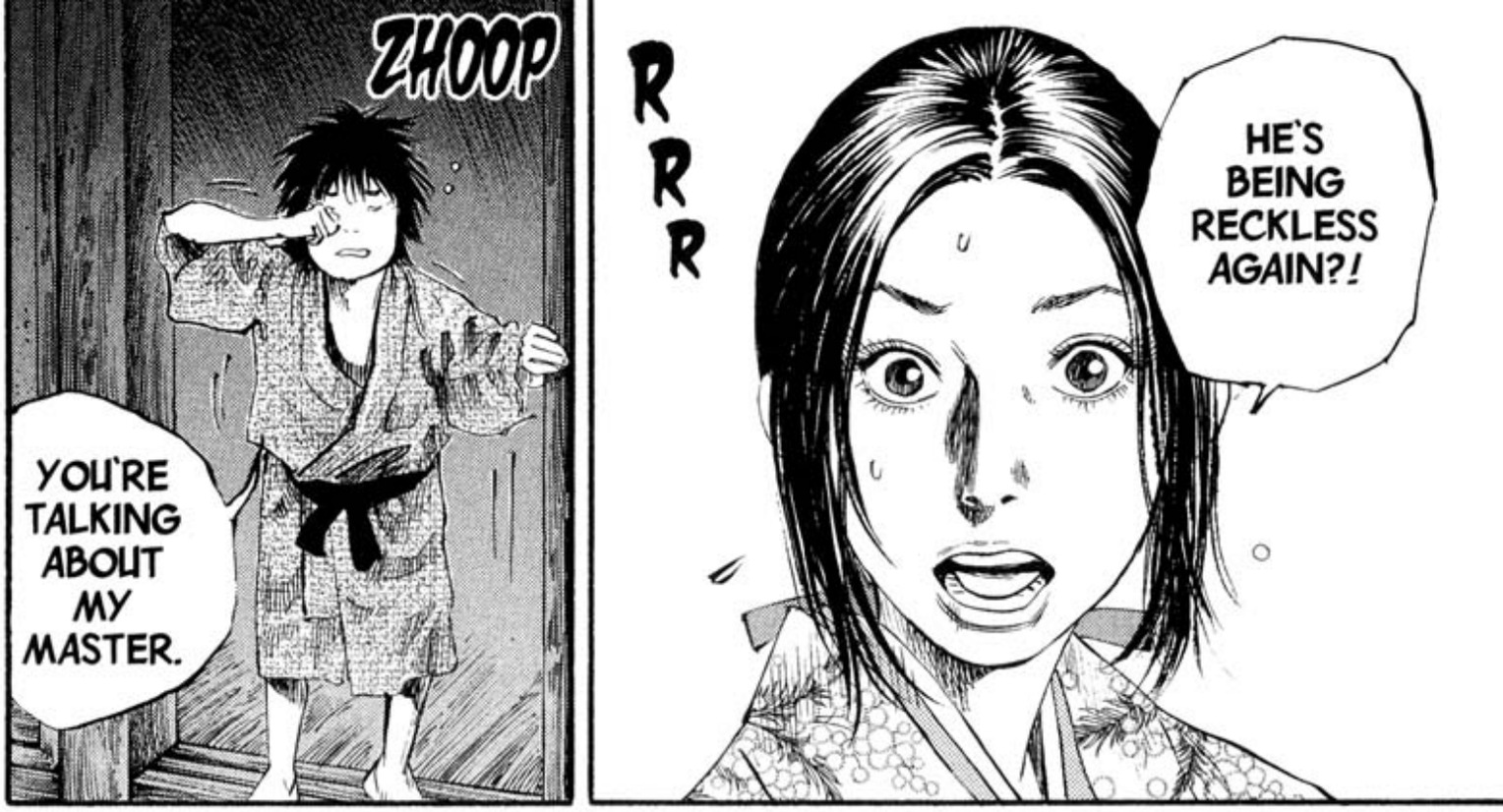
YOU STILL HAVE MUSASHI.


YOU MAY NOT KNOW YOUR OWN PARENTS...
AND I'M HERE FOR YOU AS WELL.
AND WHAT ABOUT JŌTARŌ?
AND LORD YAGYŪ WANTED ME TO REMIND YOU THAT HIS PLACE WOULD ALWAYS BE YOUR HOME.


AND...
MUSASHI'S LIGHT IS FLICKERING LIKE A CANDLE IN THE WIND...
RUMOR HAS IT THAT HE'S LOOKING TO FIGHT THE YOSHIOKA IN KYOTO.
WHAT ?!


...BUT MAINTAINING YOUR BONDS WITH OTHERS IS A PART OF LIFE.
HMM... I'M BEGINNING TO SOUND LIKE A MONK.

GONG


ZHOOP
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT MY MASTER.
RRR
HE'S BEING RECKLESS AGAIN?!

...
RUB
RUB
KYOTO?
YOUR MASTER'S RUN AMOK IN KYOTO.
OH, TARO-CHIN.

GONG
YOU'RE STILL HALF ASLEEP.
COME ON.
THEN LET'S GO TO KYOTO!
WE'RE GOING!
LET'S GO TO KYOTO!

AS IS OUR TRADITION ...
...WE GREET THE COMING OF THE NEW YEAR WITH A TRAINING SESSION.
YES, SIR!!

THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA!!

WE DEDICATE THIS NEW YEAR'S TRAINING SESSION TO YOU!!
DENSHICHIRŌ !!
WHAT'S THAT, ŌTAGURO ?

...UNTIL THE DAY OF YOUR MATCH AGAINST MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!
WE SHALL BE TRAINING WITH YOU...

ŌTAGURO HYŌSUKE!!
MIIKE JŪRŌZAEMON !!

NANPŌ YOICHIBE !!
KOBASHI KURANDO !!
I'M AN-OTHER GUY!
I'M THE OTHER GUY!
SO-AND-SO-HERE!
WE ALL KNOW EACH OTHER, THERE'S NO NEED TO ANNOUNCE OURSELVES...
THIS IS EMBARRASSING.
GION TŌJI IS STILL MISSING...
BUT THE REST OF US, THE TEN SWORDS OF THE YOSHIOKA, SHALL SERVE AS YOUR TRAINING OPPONENTS!!
AHEM
.....
AND OUR NUMBER ONE, UEDA RYŌHEI!!

...TRULY MOVES ME.
YOUR SUPPORT ...

TRAIN WITH US...
...TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT...
RIGHT UP UNTIL THE DAY OF THE MATCH.

WHAT USE IS THAT?
THE SPARRING PARTNER IS SCARED OUT OF HIS WITS?

BUT ...
PLEASE BE FORGIV-ING.

HA HA HA!!
LET US BEGIN THEN!!

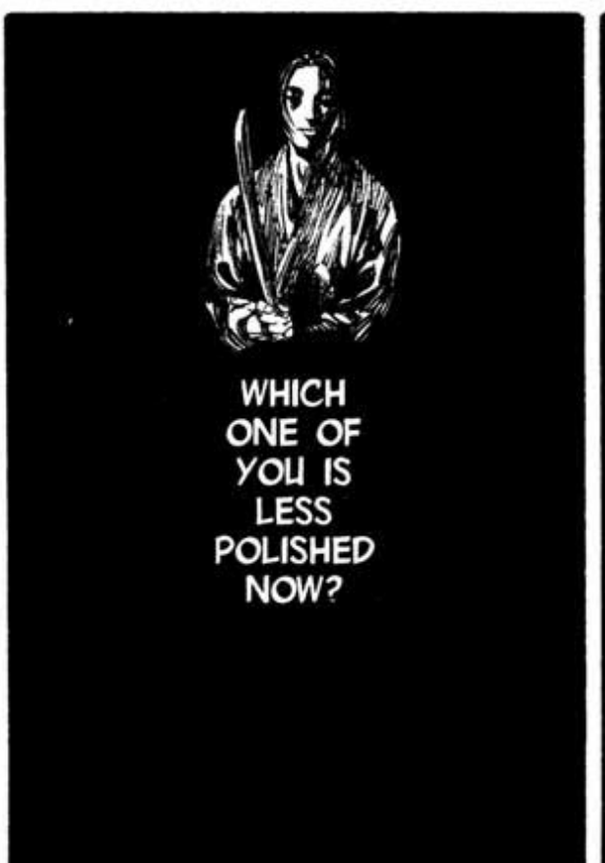
KLAK

YAH!

HUF
HUF
NEXT
!!

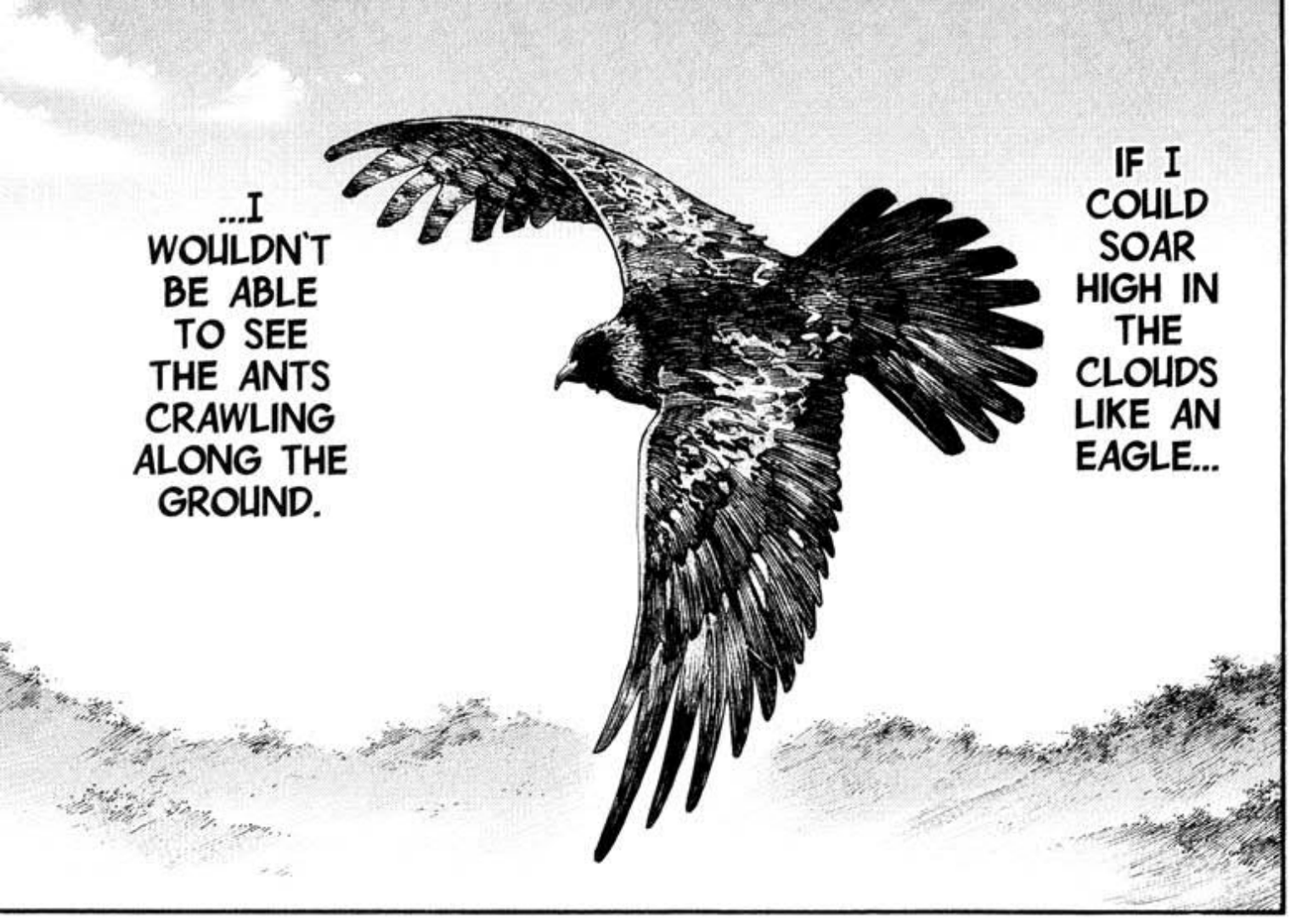
THUNK
URGH
!!

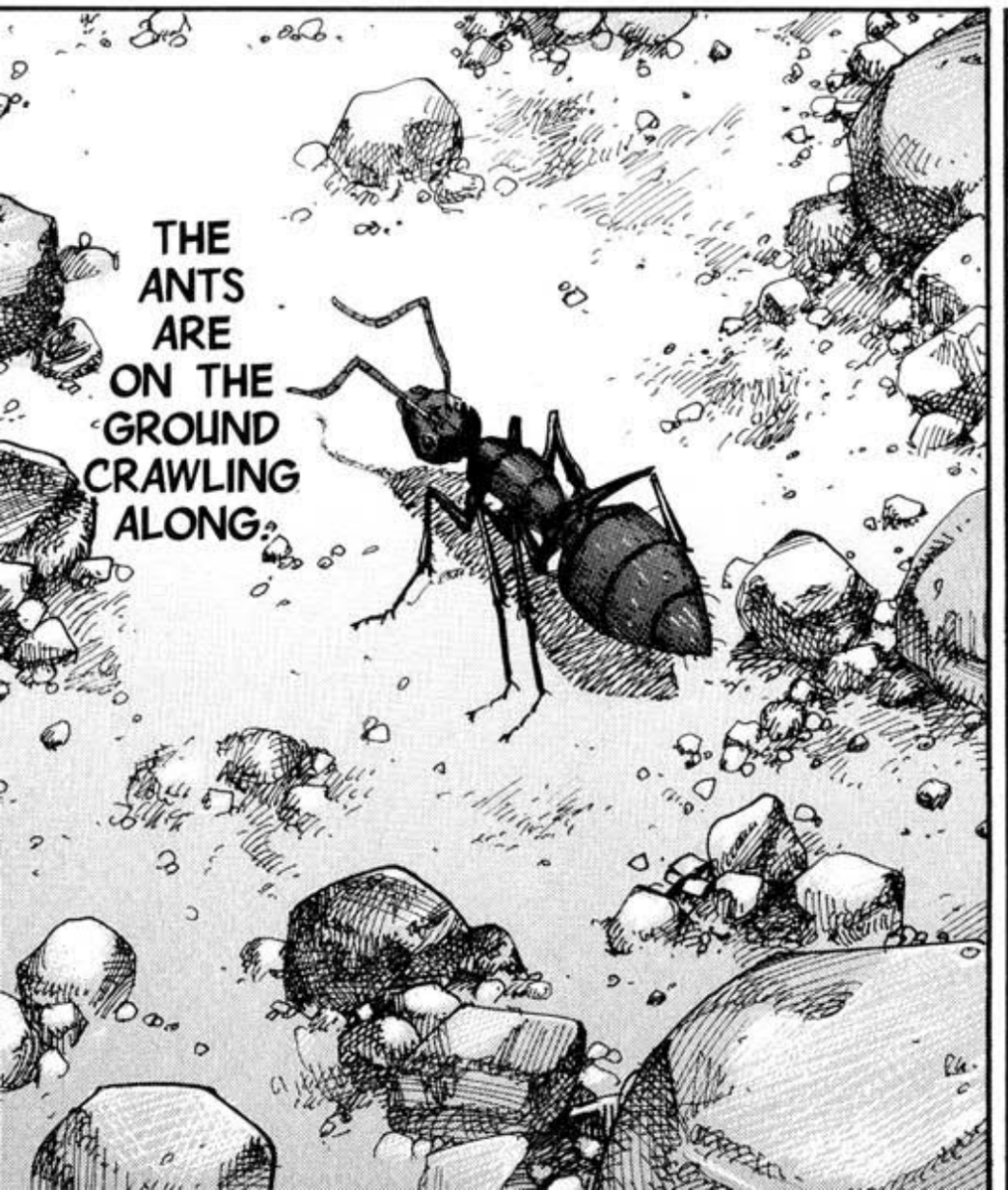
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, SEIJŪRŌ?

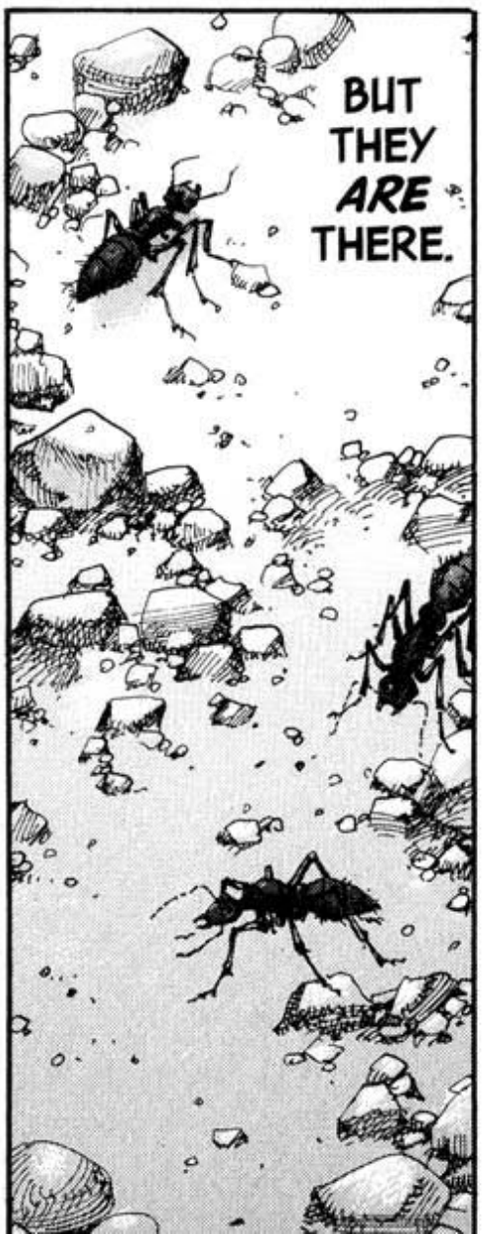

WHICH ONE OF YOU IS LESS POLISHED NOW?

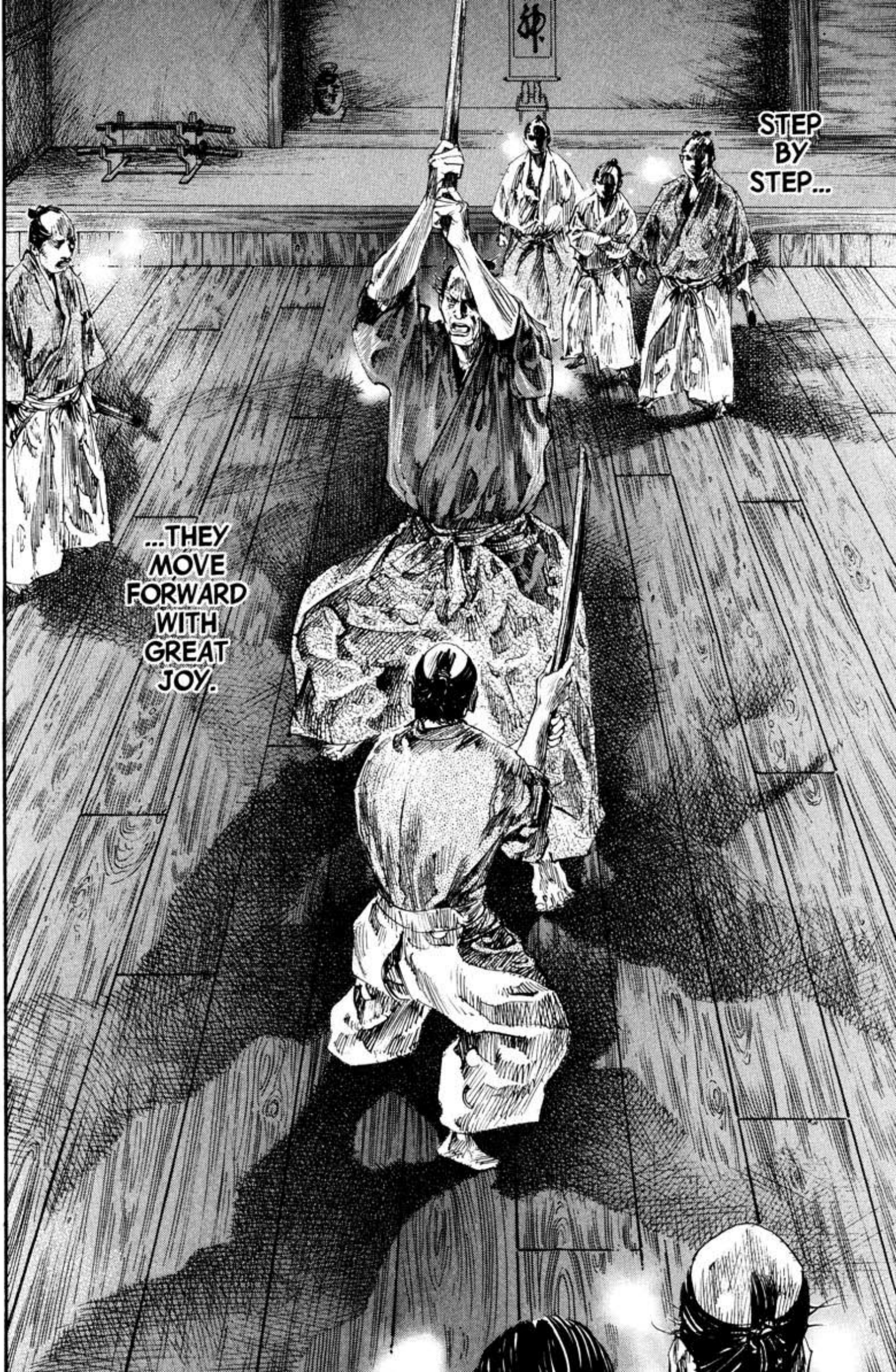
YOUR YEAR OF TRAINING WAS TIME ILL SPENT, DENSHICHIRŌ.

YAH!
I NEEDED THAT TIME TO GROW.
!!
TAK
I'M STILL GROWING, MY BROTHER.
YES ...
FIP


IF I COULD SOAR HIGH IN THE CLOUDS LIKE AN EAGLE...
...I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE THE ANTS CRAWLING ALONG THE GROUND.

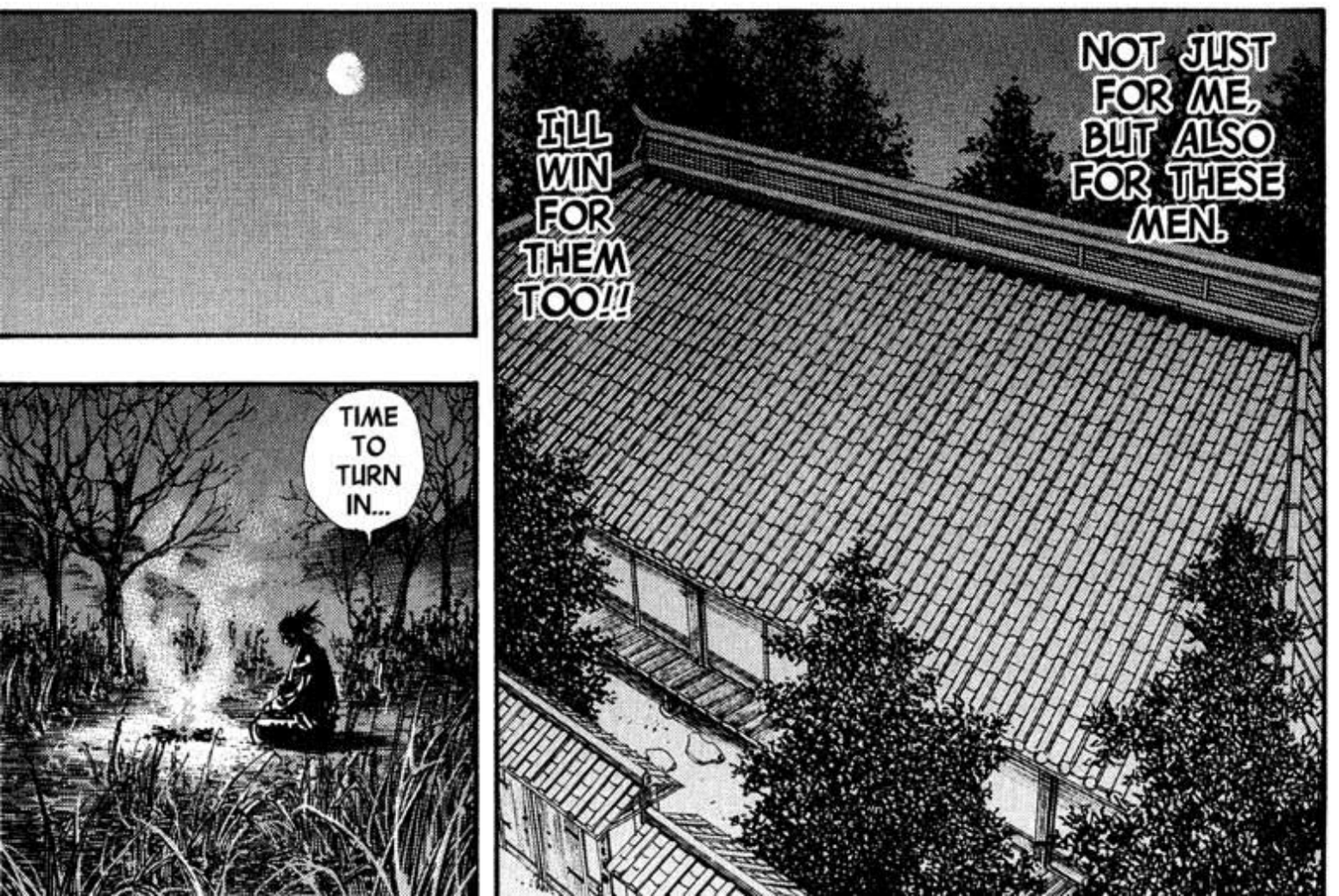

THE ANTS ARE ON THE GROUND CRAWLING ALONG.


BUT THEY *ARE* THERE.


STEP BY STEP...
...THEY MOVE FORWARD WITH GREAT JOY.

BECAUSE EVEN IF YOU HAVE, I'M STILL GOING TO WIN.
KLAK
I HOPE YOU'VE GROWN, MUSASHI.

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, ŌTA-GURO!!
I'M NOT DONE YET!!


TIME TO TURN IN...
I'LL WIN FOR THEM TOO!!
NOT JUST FOR ME, BUT ALSO FOR THESE MEN.

FWOOSH

.....

OKAY, TIME TO TURN IN...

SLISH
FWIP

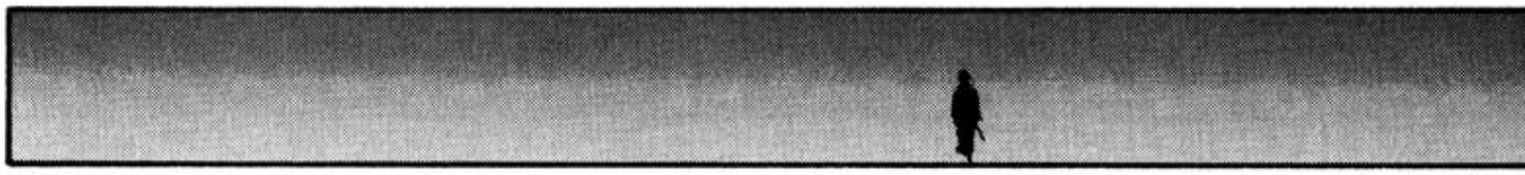
Vagabond

(FWOOSH)

.....
SWUP
HAAAH
BRR
BRR
I-I'LL END UP FREEZING TO DEATH IN THIS COLD.
ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.
SWISH
I'M ALREADY TOO STIFF.
MY BODY'LL FREEZE.
I'LL STIFFEN UP.

UTILIZING A SURPRISE ATTACK, WAIT UNTIL YOUR OPPONENT'S BODY IS COLD AND TIGHT.
I SHOULD WRITE THAT DOWN.
HOW ABOUT THIS...

WAIT...
HM...



TP

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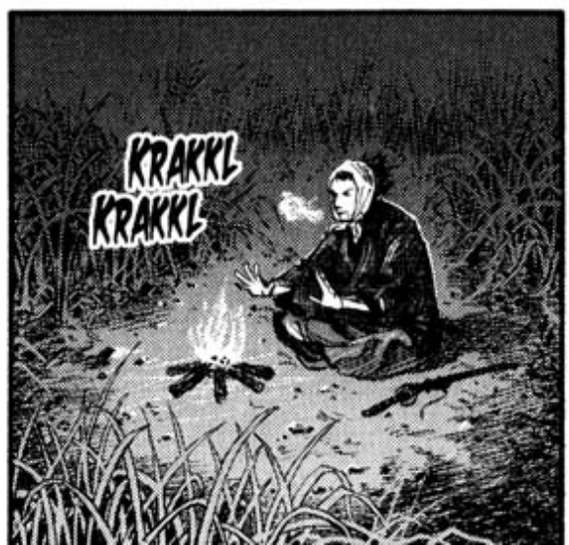
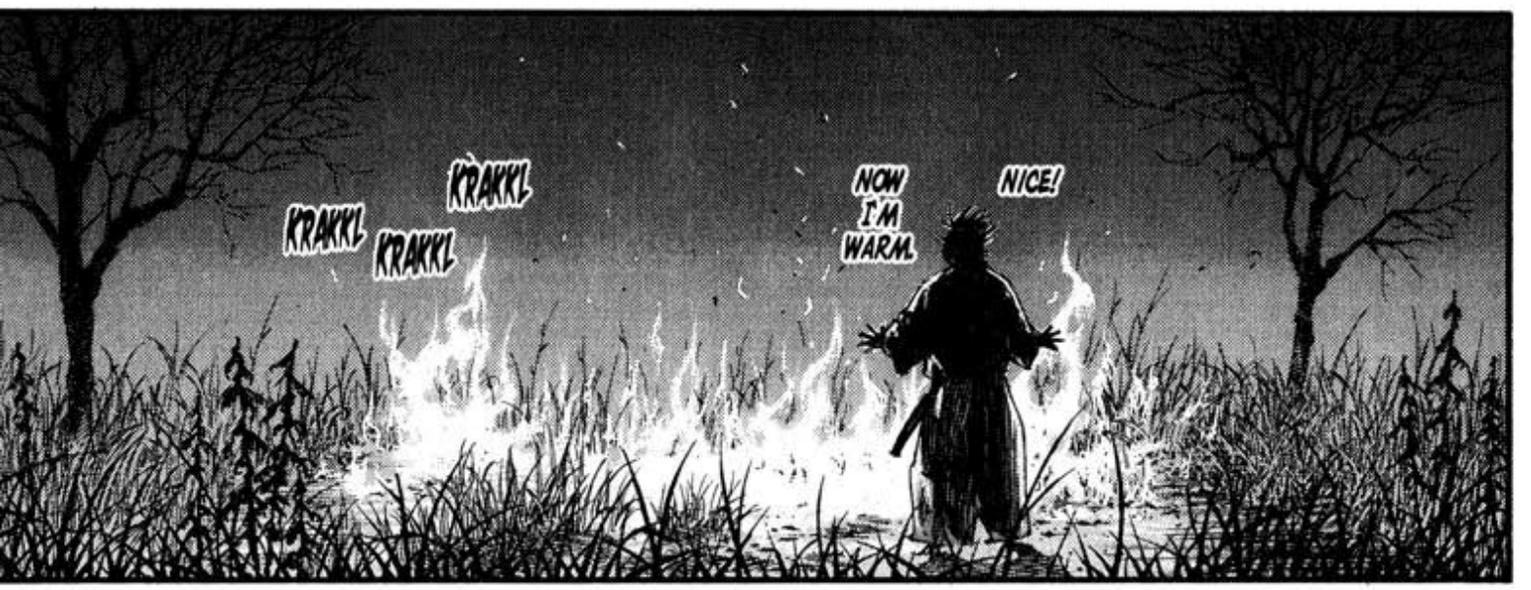

KRAKKL
KRAKKL

TUGG

HUFF
IT'S TOO COLD!

KRAKKL
KRAKKL
KRAKKL
THE DRY LEAVES BURN REALLY WELL!
BURN! BURN!

MAYBE I'LL SPREAD THE FIRE OUT A BIT...

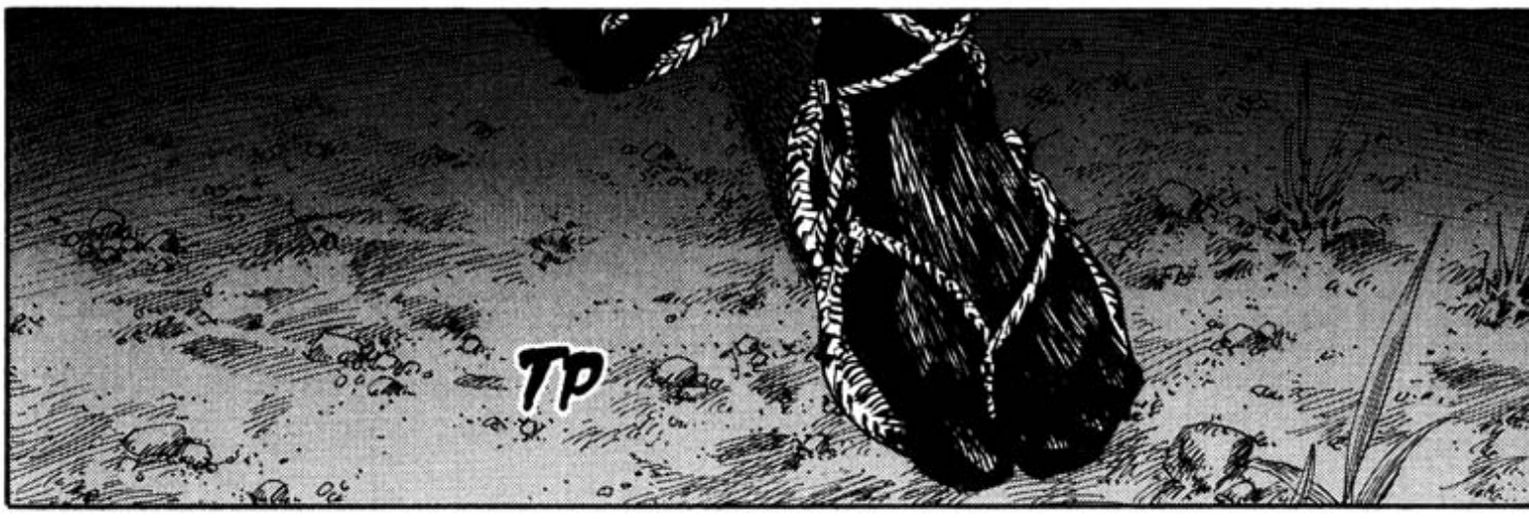

KRAKKL
KRAKKL
KRAKKL
KRAKKL
NOW I'M WARM.
NICE!

...
...
FICH
FICH

KRRRR

HUH?

TP


TP

THIS COULD BE APPLIED TO THE WAY OF THE SWORD...

A FLAME DOES NOT LIGHT EASILY ...
...BUT ONCE IT DOES...
...IT CAN GO WILD.

THIS SHOULD BE OKAY.
PHEW

HMM...
SOMEONE DIED IN BATTLE HERE...

.....

COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS ISN'T THE MOST PLEASANT OF PLACES.
HAH HA.
KRAKKL
KRAKKL
KRAKKL

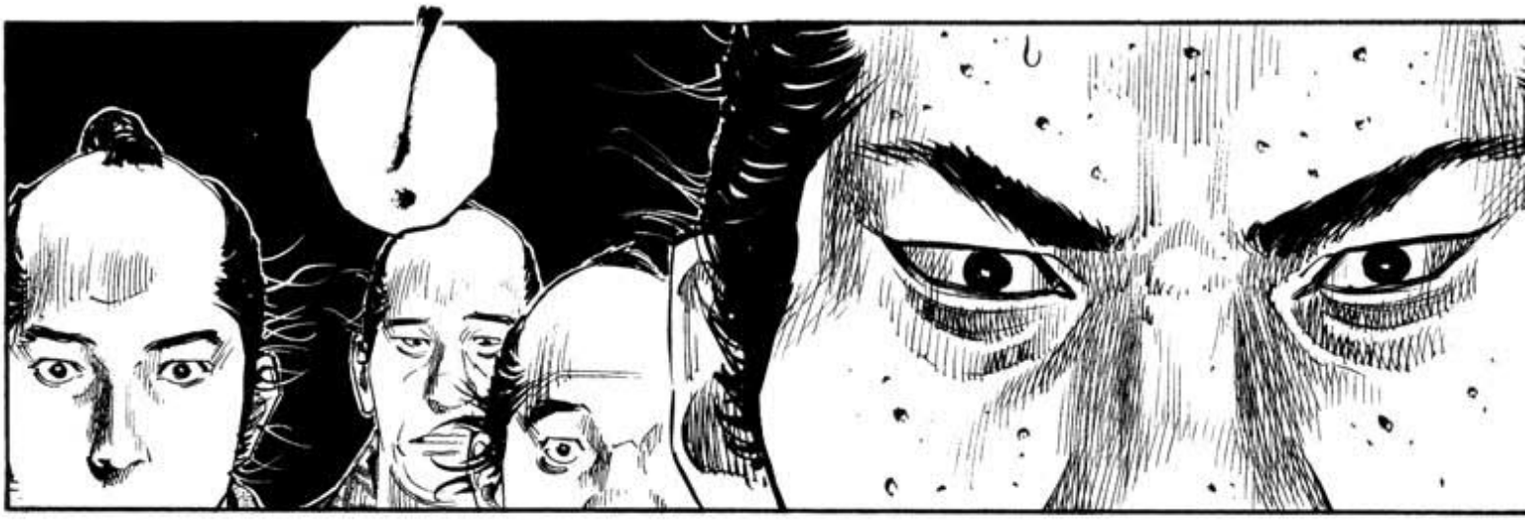
NEW YEAR'S DAY IS ALMOST HERE.

#185 | Rendaiji

THWAK
NNGH!
AARGH!
HUF!
HUF
HUF
HUF
OTAGURO!!
ARE YOU OKAY?!

WHO DO YOU THINK I AM?
I'M SORRY, ŌTAGURO.
THAT'S ...
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR TODAY.
THE BONE IS COMPLETELY CRUSHED.
UUHH
HIS RIGHT ARM IS USELESS.
I'VE BEEN WITH THE YOSHIOKA FOR 22 YEARS.
IVE ALWAYS BEEN PREPARED TO SACRIFICE AN ARM OR TWO FOR THE SAKE OF THE CLAN.
IT'S NOT OFTEN ONE GETS TO TRAIN WITH A RAW BLADE.
I'M HAPPY THAT I MAY BE OF SOME SERVICE TO YOU.
...ON THIS NIGHT, I AM GLAD THAT I STAND BEFORE YOU.
YOU SEE, DENSHICHIRŌ ...

CUT ME DOWN.
AS IF I WERE MUSASHI.


!

ŌTAGURO.

I WANT TO SEE YOU DEFEAT MUSASHI.

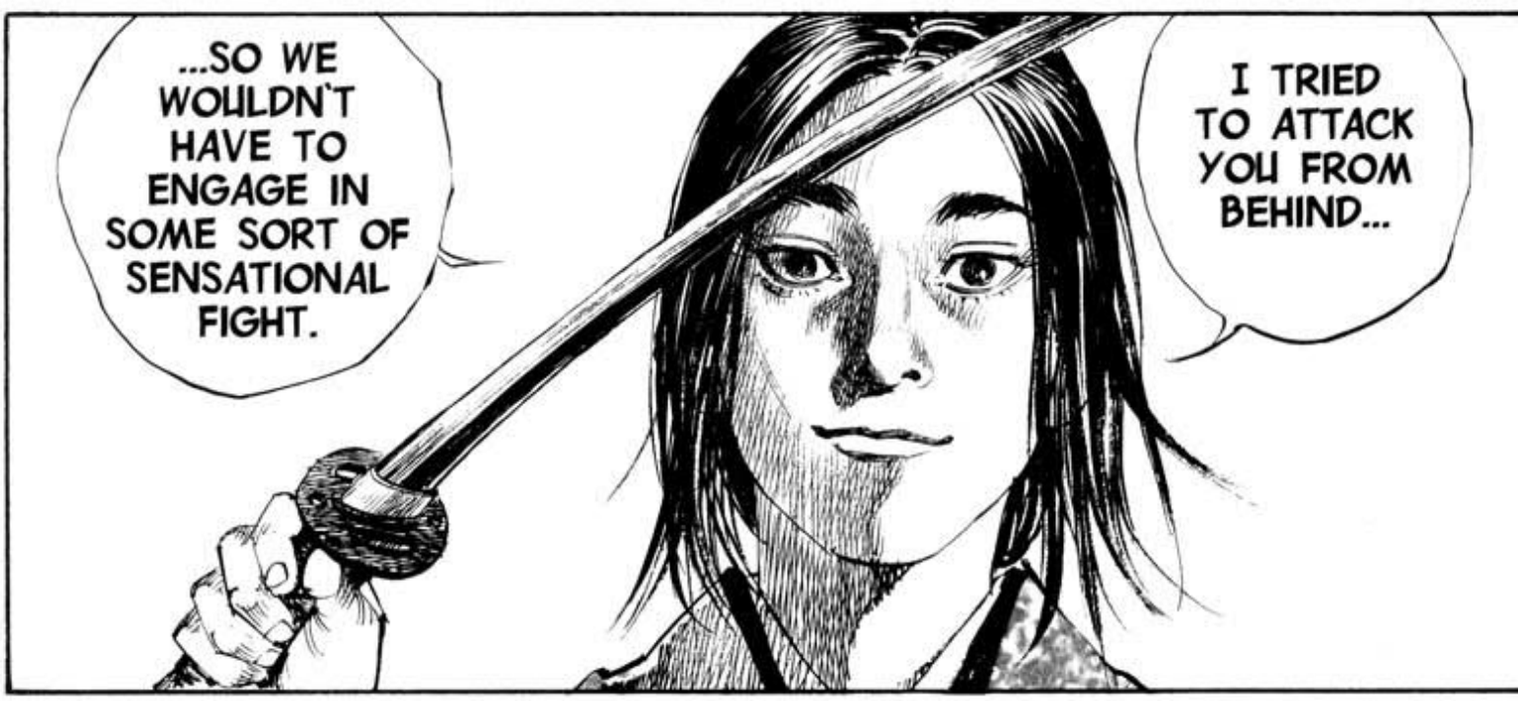
HEH HEH
BUT JUST MY RIGHT ARM.
I DON'T WANT TO DIE JUST YET.
AFTER ALL, I WANT TO BE THERE TO SEE IT.

ŌTAGURO ...
VERY WELL...
STAND ON GUARD, OR I'LL BEAT YOU SENSELESS.
THINK OF THIS ARM AS MUSASHI'S, NOT SOME USELESS LOG!
NNGH!!
NOW THEN, DENSHICHIRŌ SENSEI!!

I WILL NOT BE DEFEATED.

TUNK
SUCH CAT-LIKE QUICKNESS.
IMPRES-SIVE.
SEIJŪRŌ !!
MASTERS OF MEOW.
THEY'VE BEEN AMONG MY TEACHERS TOO.
HM.
FICH
!
FWP

YOU WERE THE ONE WATCHING ME.
SO IT WAS YOU...


...SO WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO ENGAGE IN SOME SORT OF SENSATIONAL FIGHT.
I TRIED TO ATTACK YOU FROM BEHIND...

WHAT?

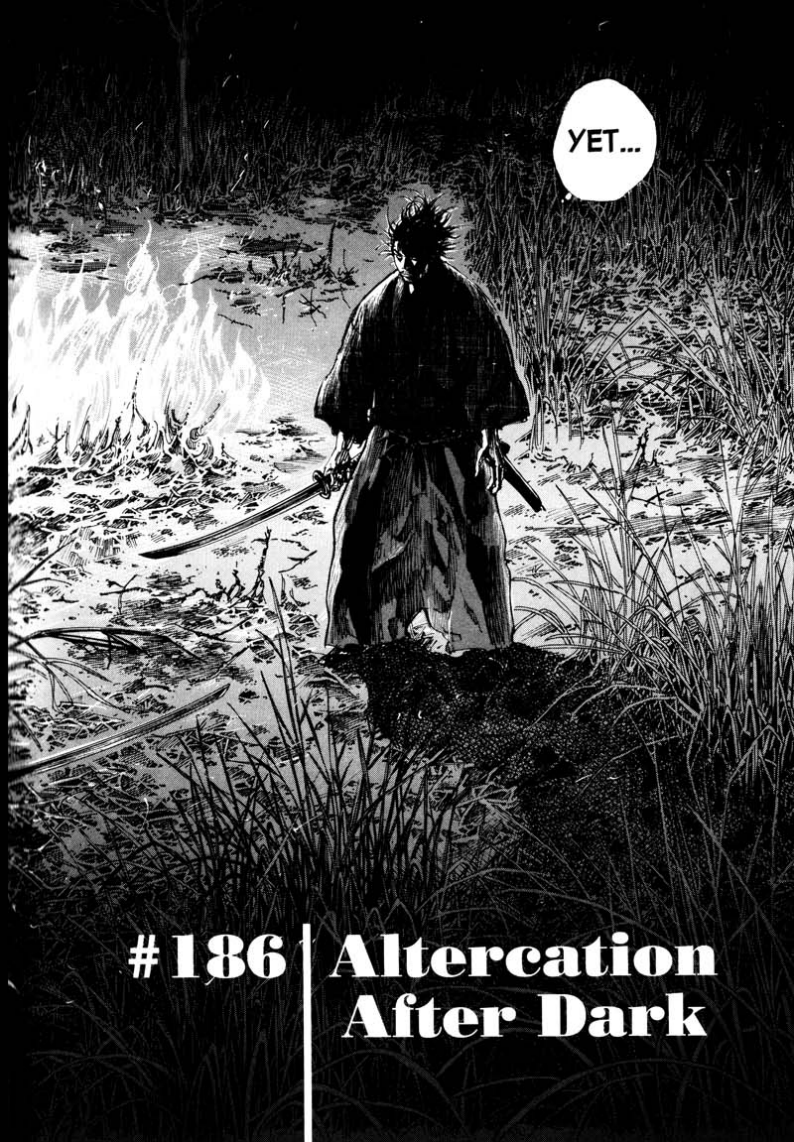
I HAVE A FEELING...
...THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE RESORTED TO SOMETHING LIKE THIS!!
ARE THOSE THE WORDS WORTHY OF THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?
.....

IN ANY CASE...
...THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I WANTED.

Vagabond

(COULD YOU REPEAT THAT?)
(HUH?)

SNEAKING IN THE DARK...
...TO KILL ONE WHO'S A THREAT AGAINST YOUR SCHOOL.
YOU CALL YOURSELF HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL?
...I BET THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE RESORTED TO SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
SOME-THING LIKE THIS?
WELL, IN ANY CASE...
...THIS IS WHAT I WANTED.



#186 | Altercation After Dark

HUF
HUF
THAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN, I SUPPOSE...
THMP-THUMP
HMPH.
HM?
I WANT TO ASK YOU SOME-THING...
MIND IF WE TALK FIRST?
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.
.....
AHEM.
FORGET IT.
HMPH
UH...
SO GO AHEAD AND ASK YOUR QUESTION.
LET ME WARN YOU, I WON'T BE DISTRACTED AND FALL PREY TO A LAME SURPRISE ATTACK.
HAH, YOU'RE SO FUNNY.
I KNOW YOU CAN'T WAIT TO START.

SO... SHALL WE GET STARTED THEN?
FICH
YES, BEFORE IT GETS ANY COLDER...
FICH

TRUE...

BOTH OUR SWORDS ARE ALREADY DRAWN AFTER ALL.

A FIGHT TO START OUT THE NEW YEAR...
HEH HEH.
YOU MUST REALLY LIKE FIGHTING.

AREN'T YOU THE SAME WAY?

OF COURSE I AM.
HUF
HUF
FWOMM

MORE SUBSTANTIAL.
HE'S DIFFER-ENT.

THERE'S MORE SUBSTANCE TO HIM.

A YEAR AGO, HE WAS FLAT AND STIFF...
...LIKE A DOOR.
BUT NOW HE'S GOT MORE THAN JUST A SINGLE LAYER.

COTTON ?
VERY UN-PLEASANT COTTON.
HM?

HE'S BIG, BUT LIGHT.
COTTON...

HE'S MORE... ROUNDED.
LIKE COTTON ?

COULD THIS BE A DEVELOP-ING CHANGE?

SHSSH

I WENT STRAIGHT FOR HIS EYES.
SO THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DOOR AND COTTON...
HUH?!
NOT AGAIN ?!
!!

WHOOSH

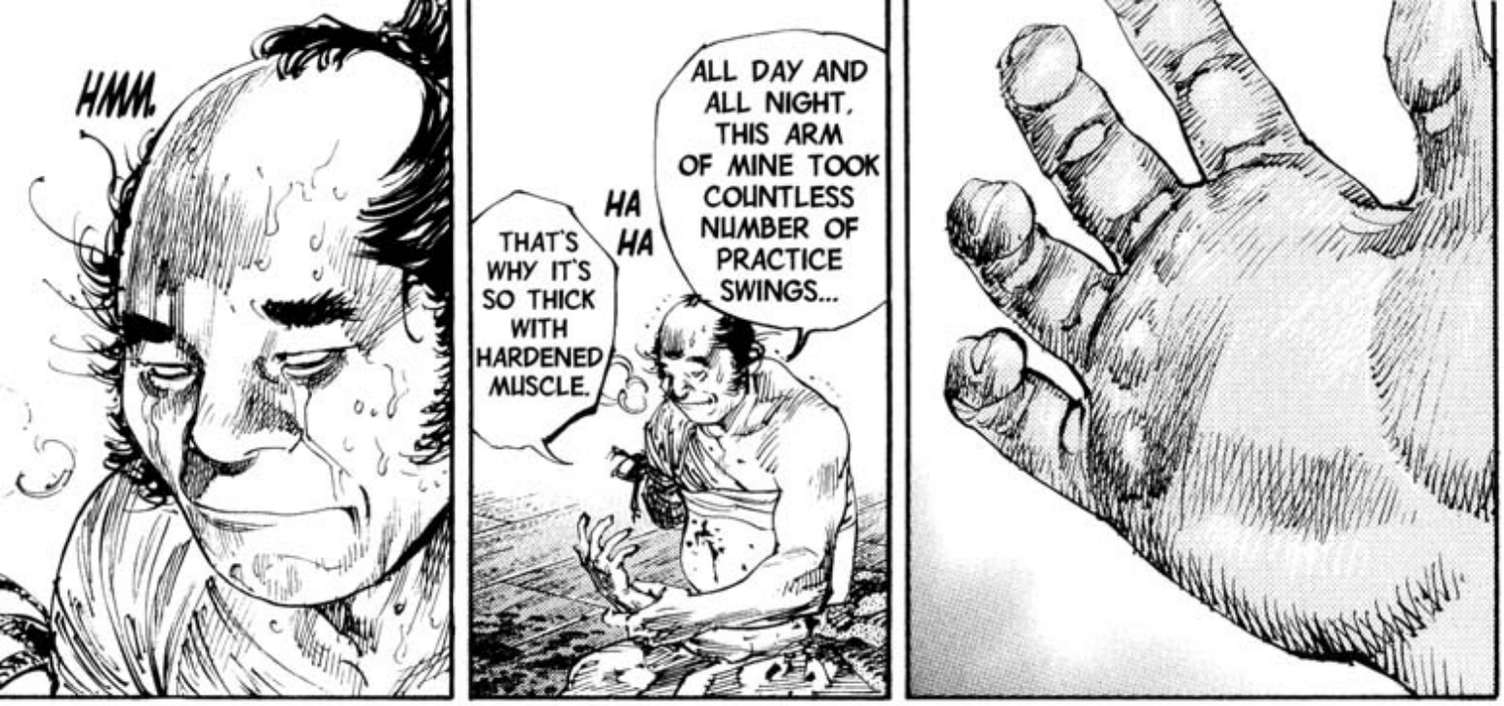
FICH
TWK
HIS ATTACK IS HEAVY LIKE WET COTTON.
HOW COULD HE HAVE CHANGED SO MUCH IN A YEAR?

SHAA!
しゃあ
SLISH

HUF
HUF
HUF
KEEP STILL, ŌTA-GURO.
ARRGH!
NNGH...
URR...
DASH

HUF
HUF
HUF
...
EXCUSE ME... DENSHICHIRŌ *SENSE!!*
M-MAGNIFICENT STROKE, DENSHICHIRŌ!

HA HA.
THAT'S RIGHT, AND THIS ONE, HE'S GOT THE THICKEST ARM AMONG US ALL.
RIGHT, EVERY-ONE?!
IT'S NO EASY FEAT TO CUT OFF AN ARM WITH ONE CLEAN STROKE.


HMM.
THAT'S WHY IT'S SO THICK WITH HARDENED MUSCLE.
HA HA
ALL DAY AND ALL NIGHT, THIS ARM OF MINE TOOK COUNTLESS NUMBER OF PRACTICE SWINGS...

...FOR THOSE 22 YEARS.
THANK YOU...

WE ARE BEHIND YOU.

DEN-SHICHIRŌ SENSEI!!
MUSASHI IS NOTHING.

VICTORY !!
VICTORY !!
VICTORY !!

UEDA !!
WHERE'S SEIJŪRŌ ?
OFF TO THE PLEASURE QUARTERS AGAIN...
HMPH ... OF ALL DAYS...

I MUST TRAIN WITH SEIJŪRŌ !!
SEIJŪRŌ !!

SEIJŪRŌ...
I MIGHT ONLY HAVE TEN DAYS LEFT BUT...
EVEN IF HE REFUSED, I SHOULD HAVE BEGGED HIM...
THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ME TO GO TO THE YAGYŪ. I SHOULD HAVE ASKED MY OWN BROTHER FOR INSTRUCTION.

I KNOW I CAN GROW STRONGER BY TRAINING WITH YOU!!

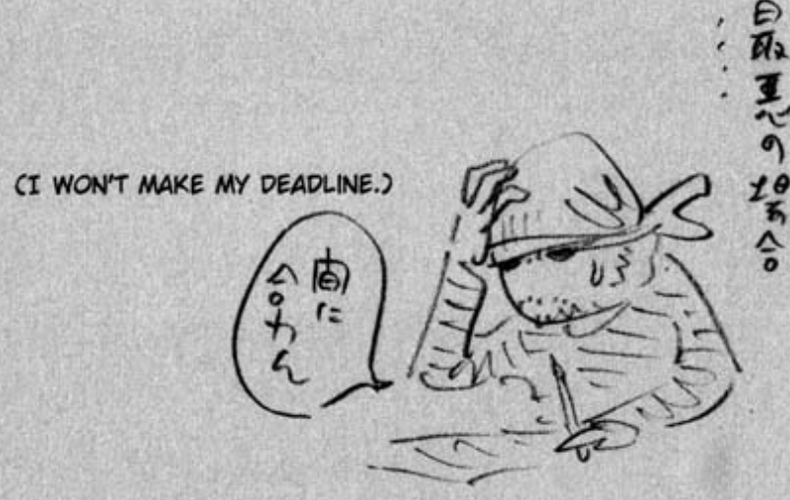
THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO...

I SUPPOSE THAT'S A POSSIBILITY...

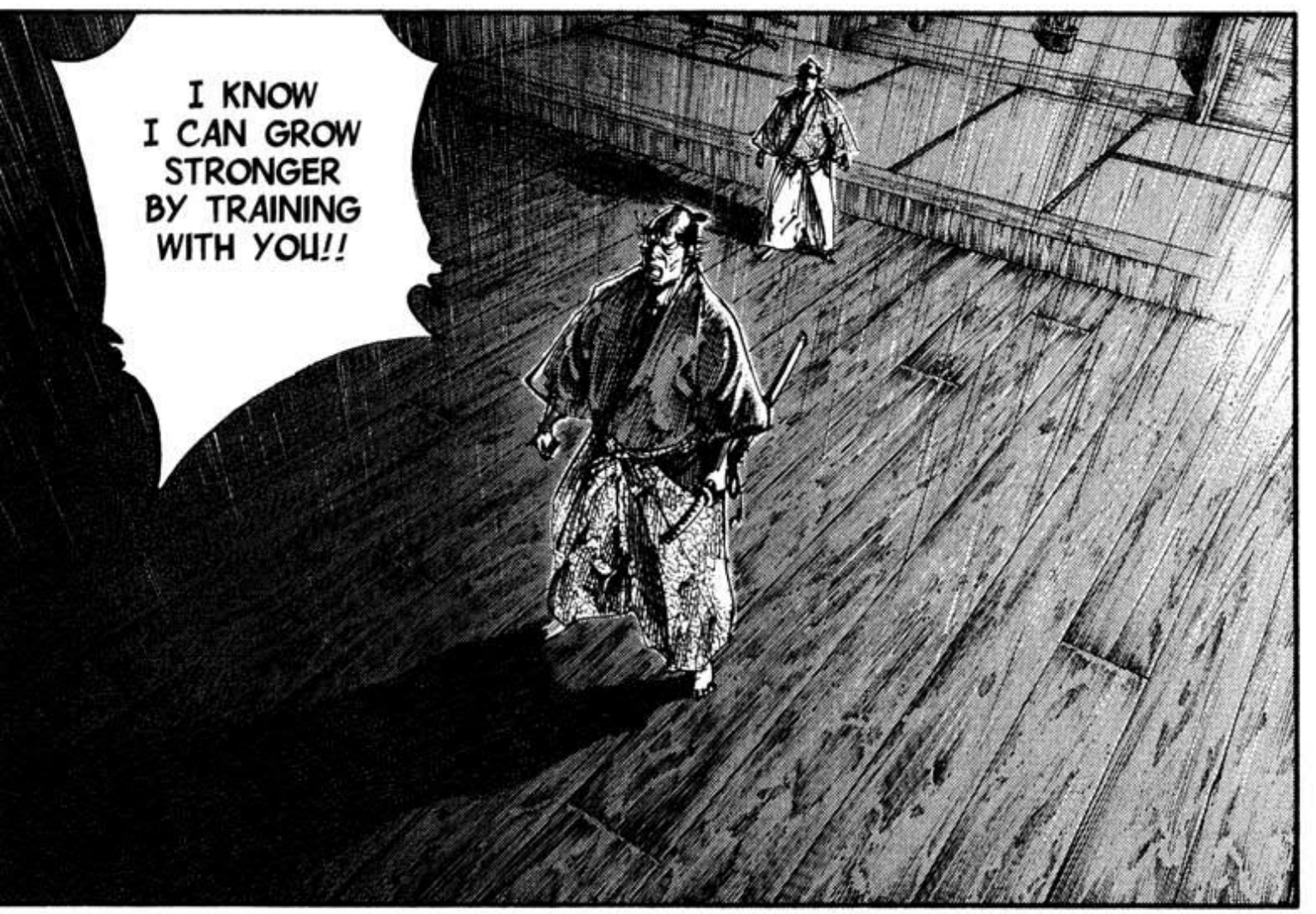
HUH?

Vagabond

(WORST CASE SCENARIO...)



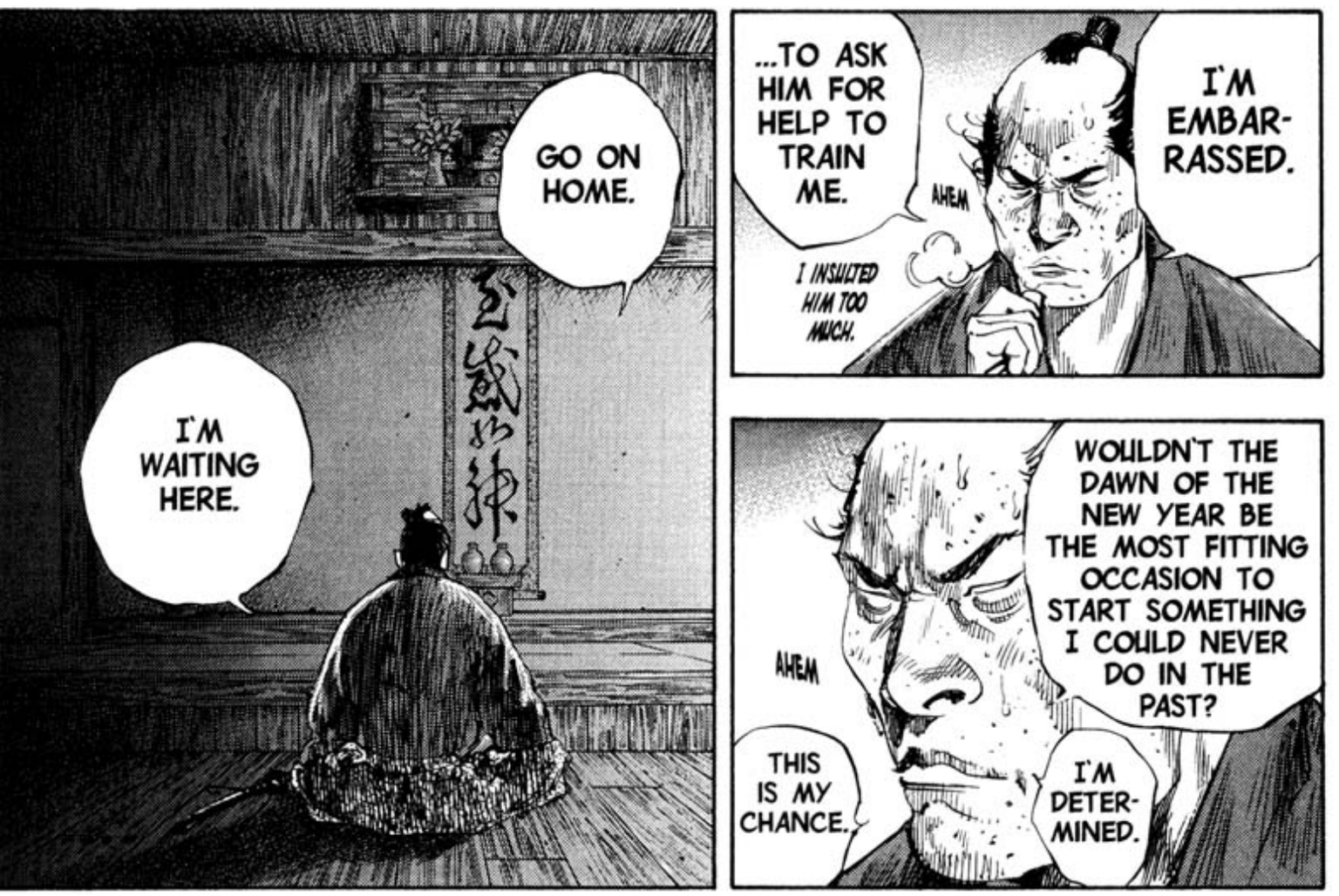
BROTHER SEIJŪRŌ...


I KNOW I CAN GROW STRONGER BY TRAINING WITH YOU!!

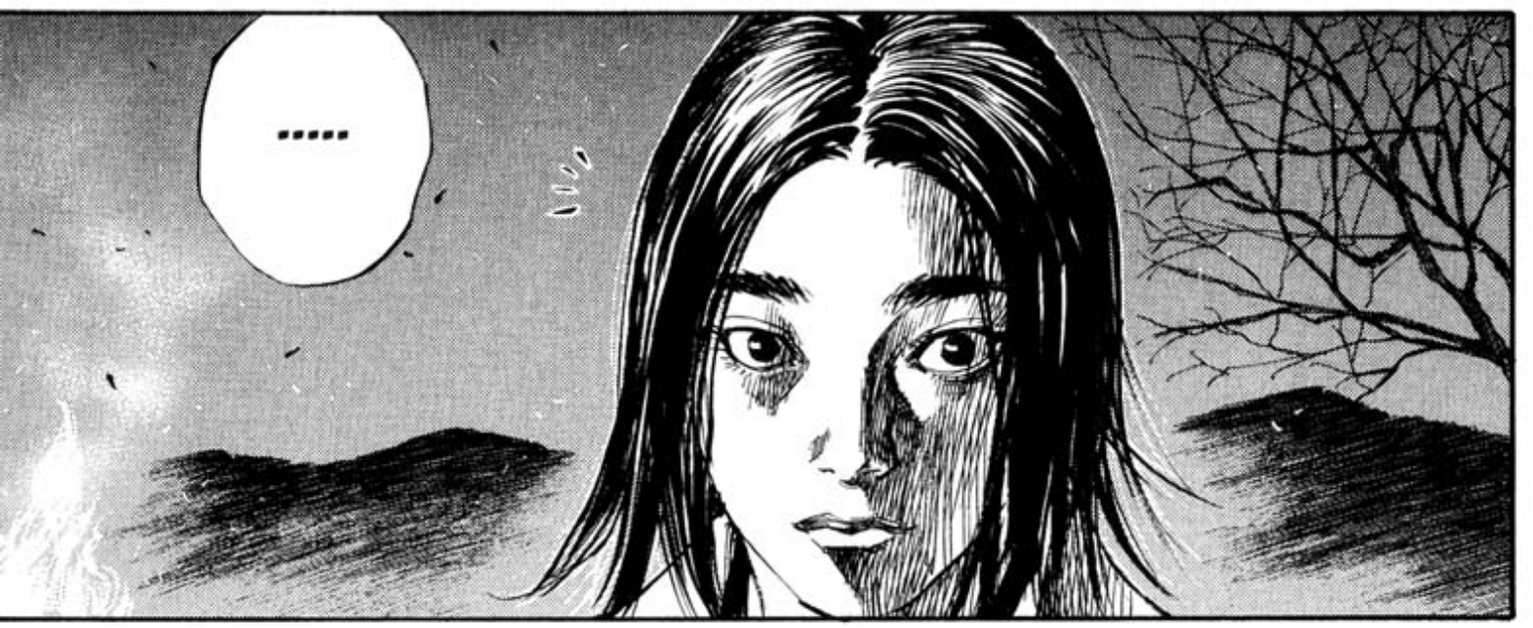
#187 Before Dawn

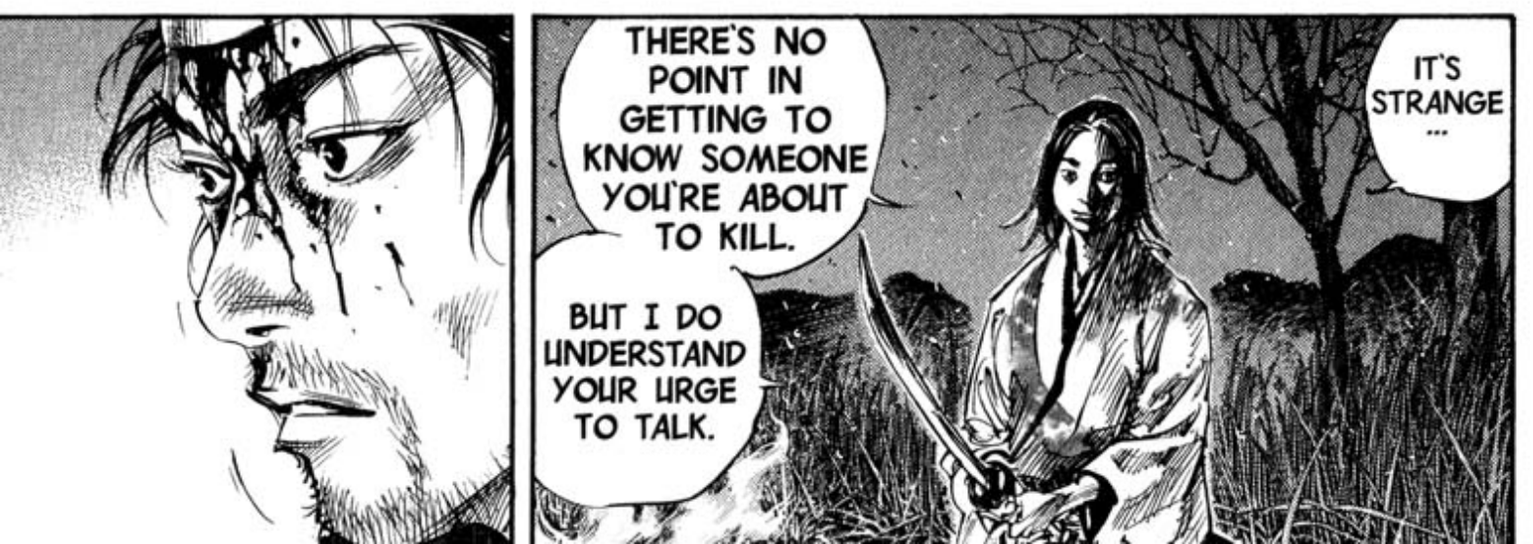
SWOOSH
I WAS A FOOL.
WHOOSH
A FOOL...
I TRAINED WITH THE IMAGE OF HIS SWORD BURNED INTO THE BACK OF MY MIND.
I FIRST PICKED UP A SWORD TO BE LIKE MY BROTHER.
BY LOOKING AWAY FROM HIM...
...I WAS DENYING MYSELF.

IT'S ALMOST DAWN.
GET SOME SLEEP, UEDA.
I'LL WAIT FOR HIM TO RETURN.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO STAY UP.
YOU CAN TALK TO HIM TOMORROW AFTER YOU WAKE UP.
.....
AHEM.

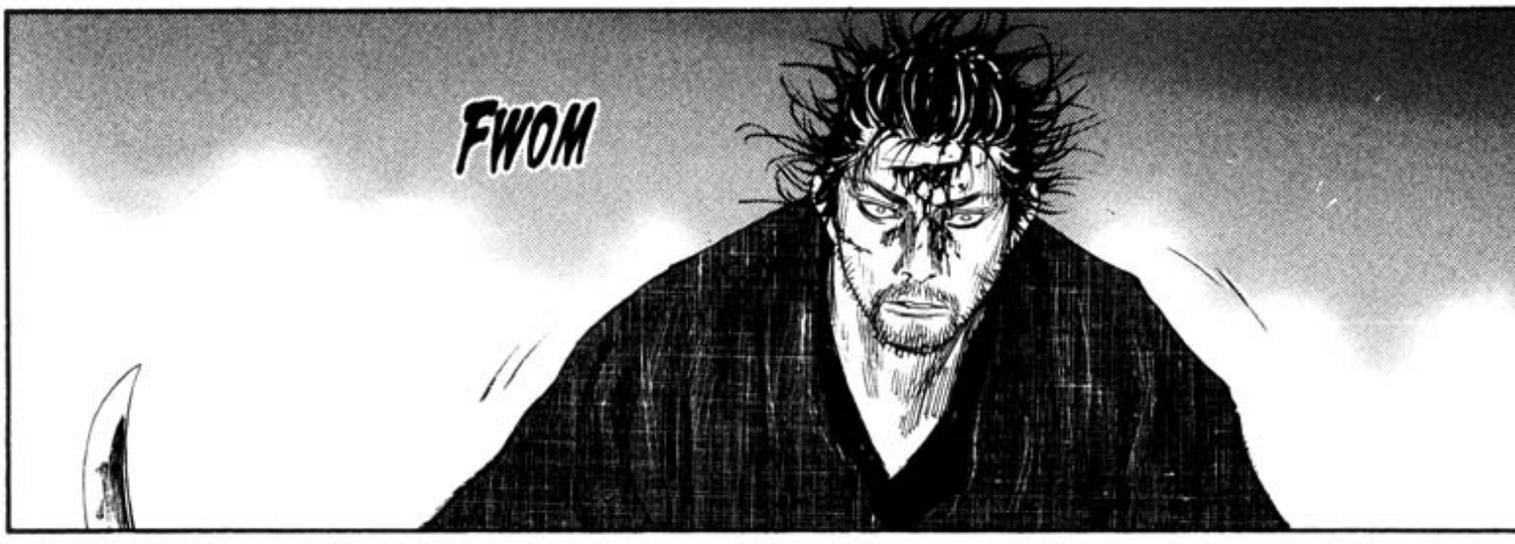

I'M EMBAR-RASSED.
...TO ASK HIM FOR HELP TO TRAIN ME.
AHEM
I INSULTED HIM TOO MUCH.
GO ON HOME.
I'M WAITING HERE.
WOULDN'T THE DAWN OF THE NEW YEAR BE THE MOST FITTING OCCASION TO START SOMETHING I COULD NEVER DO IN THE PAST?
AHEM
THIS IS MY CHANCE.
I'M DETER-MINED.

.....
.....
FWOM
FWOM

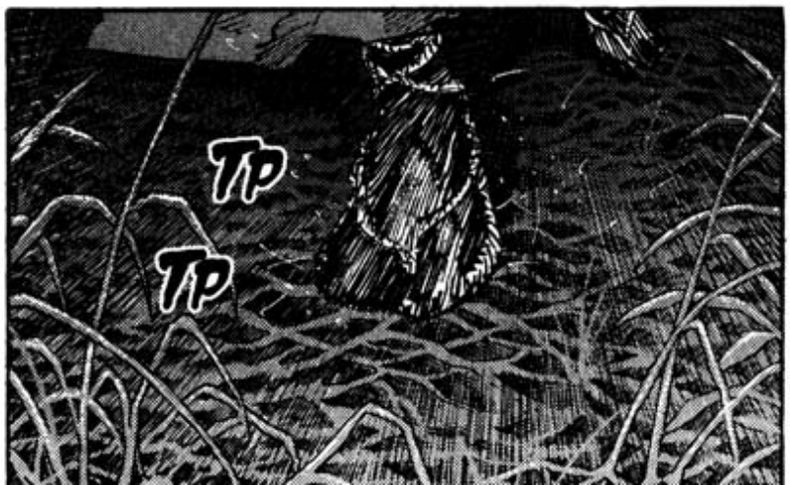

.....


THERE'S NO POINT IN GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE YOU'RE ABOUT TO KILL.
BUT I DO UNDERSTAND YOUR URGE TO TALK.
IT'S STRANGE ...

HOW DID YOU SPEND THE PAST YEAR? WHO DID YOU MEET AND WHAT DID YOU DO?
I'M CURIOUS ABOUT YOU...


FWOM

FWOM


TP
TP

HE DOESN'T HEAR ME.

ZWOOSH
FOOSH

!
FICH
FICH
FICH
FICH

TP
TP
FW
OOSH
FICH
FICH
FWOM
FWOM

FICH
!!

KOF
KOF

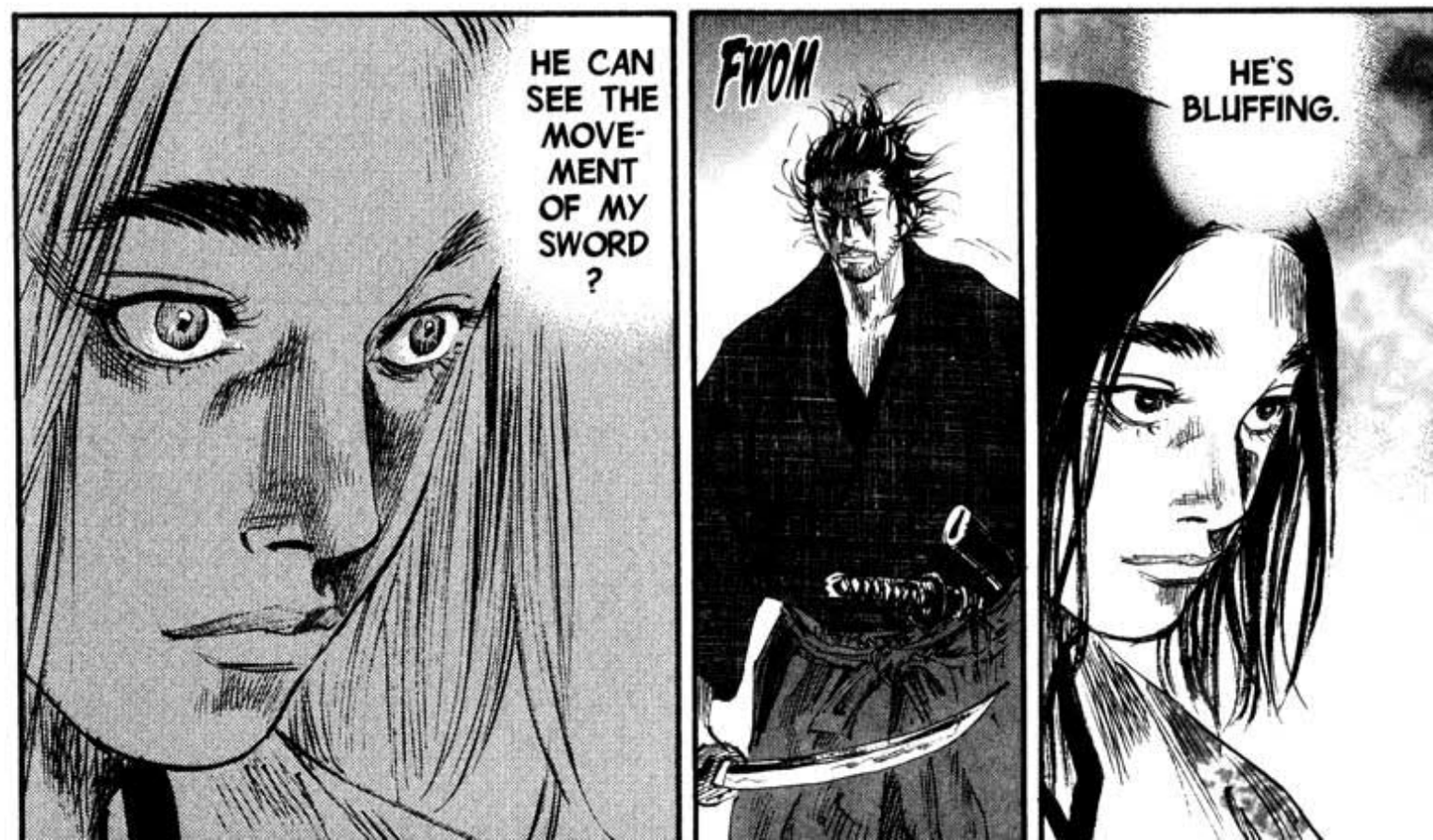
HYUU
HYUU

KOF
KOF

KRIK
KRIK
FSH
FWOM
FWOM

I WAS FORTUNATE TO ENCOUNTER YOUR SWORD A YEAR AGO...
MMBL

...
GASP
NOT THAT I SAW IT THEN AS CLEARLY AS I DO NOW.
MMBL


HE CAN SEE THE MOVE-MENT OF MY SWORD ?
FWOM
HE'S BLUFFING.

THUNK

TÜNK
UNGH!
!

PLISSH

FICH
FICH

AMAZING.

PERHAPS DENSHICHIRŌ CAN STILL CHANGE TOO.

CHIRRP
CHIRRP

BROTHER...

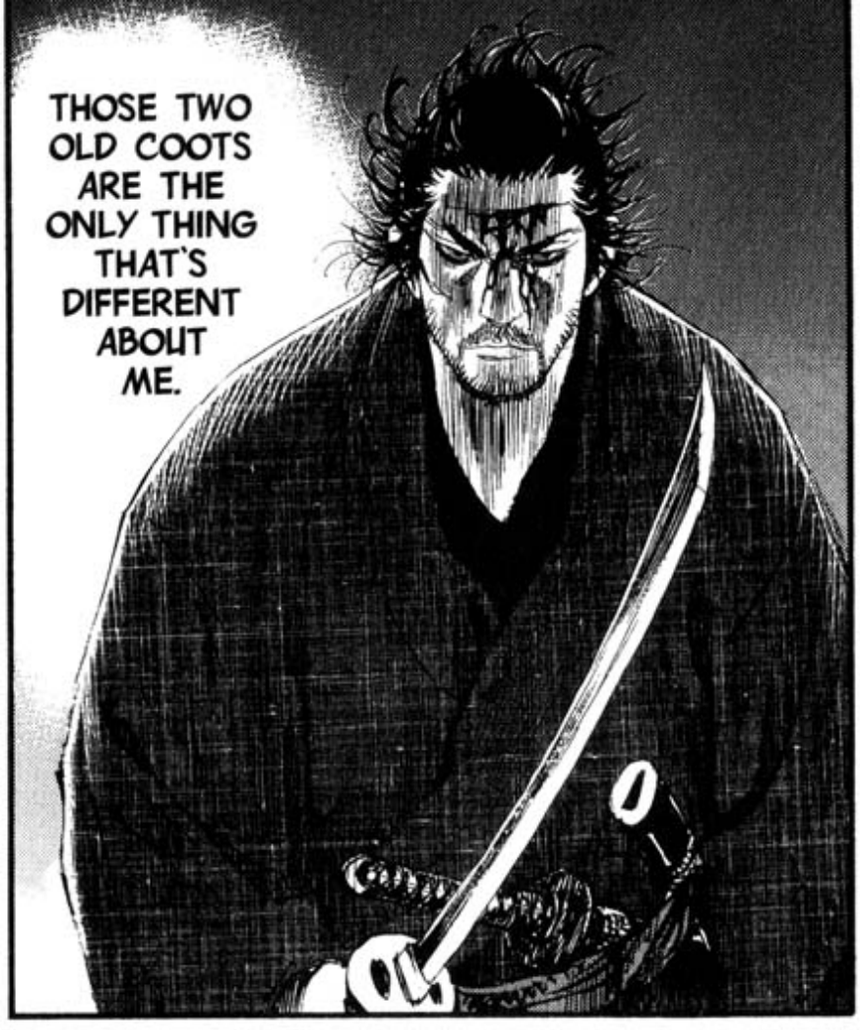
Vagabond

こっくり
(NOD)
はっ
(HUH?)

HAVE I CHANGED SO MUCH SINCE LAST YEAR?
I HAVE NO IDEA.
THE ONLY THING I KNOW THAT'S DIFFERENT...
TOO RIGID.
FWOM
IT'S YOUR FACE.
THAT'S WHAT'S TOO RIGID.
HMPH

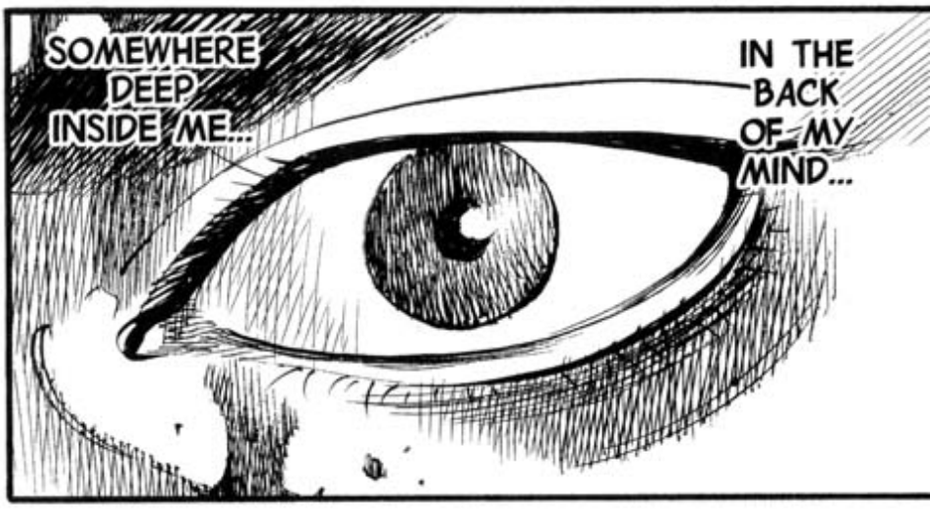
KICKING THOSE EMBERS LIKE THAT.
HRMPH
THAT WAS A MEAN TRICK.
HRMPH

BRUTE FORCE IT IS THAT HE RELIES ON.
HE'S FLAILING.
HRMPH
TSK TSK
I KNOW.
THOSE ATTACKS, TOO EASY TO DODGE, YES.
HIS FACE IS SCARY BUT NOT HIS SWORD.
TSK TSK
NO, LIKE THIS.
FWIP
ME, I'D DO IT LIKE THIS.
SHWIP
IF I WERE HIM, I'D DO THIS...
FWIP
NO, LIKE THIS, YOU FOOL.
SHWIP


THOSE TWO OLD COOTS ARE THE ONLY THING THAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT ME.

WHAT'S THAT?!
IS IT A FIGHT YOU WANT?!

SHUT UP!


SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE ME...
IN THE BACK OF MY MIND...

HRMPH
HMM...
...THOSE GEEZERS HAVE FOUND A PLACE TO EXIST.

THEY EXIST IN THE VERY SAME PLACE WHERE MY FATHER USED TO DWELL.

MAYBE I HAVE CHANGED.
KLANG

TINK

KCHUNG

BUT NOW I CAN SEE THE MOVEMENT OF YOUR SWORD!
IMPRESSIVE...
PLISH

I COULDN'T SEE IT ALL BEFORE...

THE STRONGEST SWORDS-MAN IN KYOTO...
SLISH

PLIPP
PLIPP
FWOOSH
!!
KLAK

SHWM
!!

ARGH...
FWCH
FWCH

URR
ZING
HMM...
SHWP
...!!
HUF
HUF
PLIP
PLIP
PLIP
HUF

NOW WE'RE EVEN.
HUF
HUF
GOOD...

FINALLY, THE GREAT YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ SENSEI...
...HAS DEIGNED TO TAKE ME SERIOUSLY.
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HOW MANY TIMES ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE ME DRAW MY FATAL STROKE...?

ANYONE WHO WANTS OUT, CAN QUIT.
THE SPIRAL OF KILLING...

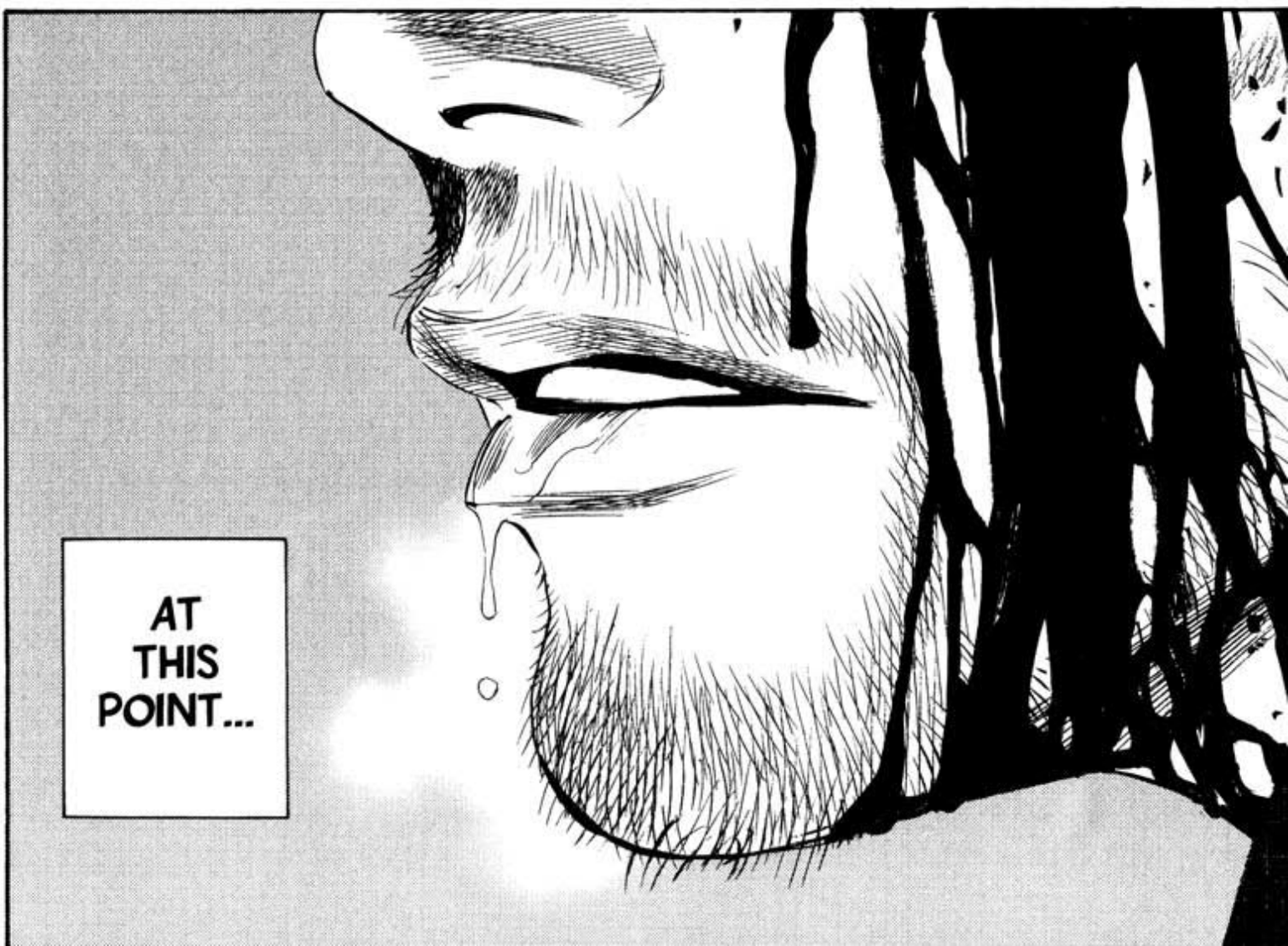
THE BATTLEGROUND...
THIS PLACE...

I DON'T CARE...
THEY CAN CALL ME A MURDERER, OR A DEMON.

IT'S THE ONLY PLACE WHERE I BELONG...
MY ANXIETIES ARE BLOCKED OUT.

I CAN FOCUS AND GIVE EVERYTHING I HAVE.

EVERY-
THING...


AT
THIS
POINT...

HIS CONSCIOUSNESS, HIS SENSES SPREAD THROUGHOUT, MUSASHI WASN'T AWARE OF HIS DROOLING MOUTH.
INSTEAD, HIS BODY HAD COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED WITH A HEIGHTENED SENSE OF AWARENESS FOCUSING SOLELY ON SEIJŪRŌ'S BLADE.

THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF MUSASHI'S EPIC BATTLE AGAINST THE ENTIRETY OF THE YOSHIOKA CLAN.

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Critically acclaimed, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga, and in 2003, Inoue was nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords simultaneously—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this manga are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

A Brief Historical Overview
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weak and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating a federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years. The political stability that resulted put mass numbers of samurai out of work. Masterless samurai, known as *ronin*, were forced to wander the land to seek out employment. This, the beginning of the Edo Period (1600-1868), sets the stage for many of the period dramas and *chambara* sword-fighting films that have popularized the image of the samurai to a Western audience.

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple, which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Rengeoin
Located in eastern Kyoto, Rengeoin Temple is more commonly referred to as Sanjusangendo. The main hall of Rengeoin features an amazing display of 1001 Kannon Buddhist statues.

Sasaki Kojiro (dates unknown)
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi, Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

Shinmen Takezo
Miyamoto Musashi's boyhood name.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND,* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

Vagabond

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